

Good morning church. It is such a beautiful thing to see us gathered here today. So many people across the world do not have the luxury of meeting in a nice building, with air conditioning and without fear of ridicule from family members or the government. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is so gracious that we can gather and learn from his most glorious Word.

I also give a lot of credit and inspiration of this sermon to John Piper specifically from his book “Let the nations be glad” I would encourage everyone of you to read this book and go deeper on this subject.

My name is Jeremiah and here recently at Grace we have been going through Hebrews. This weekend Pastor Jon is away at a pastors conference, so they elders graciously let me come before you all this morning.

In no way is this sermon a representation that I have fully mastered this topic or spiritual discipline. I believe this summer I was more curious about what God truly teaches about prayer, specifically for the nations. And this is what I learned and am continuing to grow in. I hope that you are excited to learn from our Great God alongside of me and see what he is teaching us.

The title of the sermon this morning is “**Faithful Prayer that Glorifies God Among the Nations**” (*repeat*)

Let’s pray to get started today.

My prayer is that God would open our hearts this morning to desire to be obedient to the commands he has clearly given us in his word – namely that we would give our lives as a pleasing sacrifice to the Lord in how we go to the nations, send to the nations, and ultimately pray for his glory to be spread across the whole earth.

I have two points this morning.

1. We are called to **Trust a Promise that God will save people from the nations.**
2. We can **pray in confidence knowing that God will save and complete his mission.**

(Repeat) (Share where we are going, introduction, two points, some applications)

Let’s pray this morning and ask for Help from God to truly consider these things. I want us to pray also for a people who have not heard the gospel.

We will be praying for the Pashtun people in the Northern United states. These people come from afghanistan, pakistan, and india. It says about **151,000** are unreached by the gospel and that number will continue to grow in the coming days with immigration. Let’s pray.

INTRODUCTION

Let us think about war. War is often a scary thought for me, but besides that let’s think of a family in war for a minute.

The parents willingly give up their younger men. Those men then are given some training and shipped off to a foreign land they have never known before. Then the remaining men, women and children sacrifice the rest they have for the war effort. They ration out food, oil, gas, and

work in factories all to make sure the war is won. The mothers of the young men day and night pray their children would be safe and that their cause would prevail in the face of evil.

They do all of this and much more, why? Because they believe in their cause. That this great sacrifice is worthy to fight evil and bring about good.

In the same way, **life is war**. That's not all it is. But it is always that. **Our weakness in prayer is owing largely to our neglect of this truth. That life is war.**

When Paul came to the end of his life, he said in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

1 Timothy 6:12, he tells Timothy, "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called."

Jesus said, "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able"

Hebrews 4:11 says, "Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience."

Paul compares the Christian life to a race and says, "Every athlete strives and uses self-control in all things. They do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we do it to obtain an imperishable one."

There are so many more verses that I will not even mention this morning. I encourage you to check out Chapter two of Let the Nations Be Glad by John Piper. But it is vitally important that you know this life is war. If you understand this reality, then **we can understand how to best live this life to the glory of the Father. We are not called to comfort or success, but to obedience.** This life is not about getting ours in the world—it is about striving to honor and glorify the one who has redeemed our souls.

I hope these words are very familiar to you. Jesus's last proclamation to his disciples was a great commission or in other words – Jesus gives his disciples a task, a mission to strive to do.

Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and said to them, "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go** therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This is a foundational understanding. That all authority has been given to Christ, now go and make disciples, teaching them to observe all the commands of Christ. And Jesus is with us always, until the end of the age.

That is the great task we all have been given, that God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ would spread to all nations, in the confidence of his authority. Nothing can prevail against the church in this endeavor—and **we are called to pray fiercely for this task to be accomplished.**

With this in mind, let's move to point number one this morning.

It's going to be more of a topical sermon today, we will mainly be in John chapter 10, but feel free to move to specific passages if you'd like.

1. We are called to **Trust a Promise that God will save people from the nations.** (Genesis chapter 3, John 10:14-18)

At the beginning of the bible, we observe some very important moments.

First, we see the Triune God creating everything and it was created perfectly. God's plan was to have Man rule over the earth and ultimately that God's glory would spread to the ends of the earth as Adam and Eve had children and their children's offspring covered the earth.

But we know that Man was tempted to pridefully be like God and not follow God's commands which are best for them. Adam then disobeyed and desired be the king and ruler of his own life instead of trusting God. From this first sin – the original sin - we find God giving a promise.

Genesis 3:15 says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**"

At this moment, because of Adams sin, all of humanity rightfully deserves eternal punishment and torment in Hell because of their sin nature which is against The Holy God. In the face of what we deserve, God himself graciously takes on to save his people.

We need saving. And God gives us a promise to save with his very first announcement of his redemptive design for a messianic deliverer. He says that a descendant, or an offspring from the woman whom Satan has deceived will ultimately overcome Satan and his influence.

This is so important to our understanding of the gospel, from the very beginning of time God's plan was to spread his glory throughout all the earth by relationship with people. Now we see the promise of Christ coming to redeem fallen humanity from the very beginning of scripture. **Gods continual plan for his glory to be spread to all the earth is now through the redeemed humanity**— namely Christians.

God is now having **his glory spread throughout all the earth by Christians and Churches**. These churches are the representatives of God's glory throughout the whole earth. Now seeing from the beginning that God desired to save and spread his glory throughout the whole earth, we come to another promise in John 10:14-18.

John 10:14-18 says, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. **And I have other sheep that are not of this fold**. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

Jesus says, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice." This is the great missionary text of John's gospel. This promise is filled

with great hope and power. It means that Christ has people besides those already converted. “I have other sheep that are not of this fold.” Meaning, there are others in this world who are not yet Christians, that Christ will call to himself to be saved. God chooses who will belong to his sheep, and they are already his before Jesus calls them.

John 6:37, “all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”

This is the great promise! That when we go into foreign lands where the gospel is not yet known, Christ has people there who are already his! We know that faith comes by hearing the word preached, but how will they hear without someone preaching?

We have great hope because we know we do not go to the nations or send to the nations in vain—but there will be people from every tribe, nation and tongue represented in heaven before the throne by God's gracious salvation through Jesus.

In trusting this promise we then will be fueled to pray faithfully for God's plan to be accomplished.

2. We can pray in confidence knowing that God will save and complete His mission.
(Ephesians 6:17-18, John 15:16)

I'm going to quote John Piper for a minute because it is so beautifully said. He says, “God does not put his gospel and his people in the world and leave them to wage war on their own. He is the main combatant, and the battle is to be fought in a way that gives him the glory.

This is why God has ordained prayer to have such a crucial place in the mission of the church. *The purpose of prayer is to make clear to all the participants in this war that the victory belongs to the Lord.* **Prayer is God's appointed means of bringing grace to us and glory to himself.** This is crystal clear in Psalm 50:15. God says, “call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

Later in the chapter John Piper says, “Jesus had told his disciples, ‘Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that my Father may be glorified in the Son’ (John 14:13). In other words, **the ultimate purpose of prayer is that the Father be glorified.**

How then do we glorify Jesus? He gives the answer in John 15:7: ‘if you abide in me, and my words abide in you. Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.’ We pray. We ask God to do for us through Christ what we can't do for ourselves—bear fruit. Then verse 8 gives the result: ‘By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit.’ So how is God glorified by prayer? **Prayer is the open admission that without Christ we can do nothing.** And prayer is the turning away from ourselves to God in the confidence that he will provide the help we need. **Prayer humbles us as needy and exalts God as the all-sufficient.**

The missionary task advances by prayer. **The chief end of God is to glorify God.** He will do just that, He will glorify Himself, that his purpose may be complete—*the nations worshipping him.*

In prayer we rightfully exalt God to the position only he can hold – the Savior and worker of salvation to all who are being saved.

Paul in Ephesians after exhorting them to take on the full armor of God for battle says, “pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, *making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.*” Ephesians 6:18-19.

Paul encourages them to keep alert with all perseverance to pray for Christians and also for himself, that he may preach the gospel boldly. He gives us this example, that we are called to pray faithfully for Christians to boldly proclaim the mystery of the gospel.

We have unshakeable confidence in our God.

Psalm 115:3 says, “He does all that he pleases” Job 42:2, “No purpose of [his] can be thwarted” Daniel 4:35, “None can stay his hand”

God says to Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Who determined it’s measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?” And God continues to name off things only he can do because of HE alone is all-powerful!

John 10:27-30, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. *I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.*”

Romans 8:31, “If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

From these verses we have unshakeable confidence that we are God’s, and He will fulfill his purposes. No matter what happens tomorrow he is sitting on his throne ruling. There is not one rogue molecule in this universe that is outside the will and control of God’s sovereignty.

And this gives us great hope-knowing all things work out for the good of those who are called according to God's purpose. **Nothing is meaningless in this life. All things, even hard trials have purpose in this life and are doing something.**

In the gospel of Matthew later in chapter 6 we see Jesus talking about God's sovereignty. He tells the disciples that the lilies of the field are clothed with more splendor than Solomon in all of his glory. And he calls us to look to the birds of the air, they do not sow or reap or gather into barns for later, but yet God the Father feeds them. **If he does all of this for the lilies and sparrows, will he not take care of our needs in the pursuit of righteousness?**

Pastor Jon just talked about how God is a Father to us. But have you ever really thought about what that means that God is a father to us? Like what does that really mean that he is our Father? He is a *gracious, loving* Father to us. He loves for us to come and be needy before him!

Who is harsh with their own son or daughter? No! If you have children you love your children. You love when your children come to you and ask for help. Or children you love when you come to your parents and they help you. In a same kind of way, God our Father loves when we come to him with our needs. **He loves when we draw near and ask him for help.**

Is anyone here *hurting this week*? Has anyone had any *trials or troubles this week*? Has anyone had times where you just can't move forward? Like the weight of this life just weighs so heavily on you. Or maybe there are things going on in your families. Or your marriage has been hard to endure with sacrificial love. Or it's been hard to be patient with your kids.

If you've experienced any of these things this week or more, **I would ask you in all seriousness, how much time have you spent on your knees with God?** How many times have you been still and known that He is Lord? Have you ran to him with your burdens and asked for Help?

God alone can help us in this life. He brings true peace that surpasses all understanding. If we run to anything else besides the love of the Father we find nothing and continue carrying our own burdens.

Maybe you have ran to the Lord in somethings this week, or maybe not. **Why not?** Pride. Pride is the root of all evil. Pride is where the first man fell trying to be like God instead of depending upon God. The bible tell us that God "opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

The first action in salvation is being humiliated before God. You realize God is so holy and perfect and we are not. Humility is that open admission and crying out to God saying, "Father, I am so sinful, I am so wordly, little have I considered you in my days and my ways, I need help! Lord please forgive me and save me." That is humility. **The open admission that we are wholly dependant on God and need to be saved from ourselves, our pride.**

If today you cannot say with full confidence in your heart before God and before men on this earth that Christ Jesus is your life, **I would plead with you to repent**. Repentance is just a term for turning away from something and pursuing another greater thing. Repent from your sinful nature, your sinful lifestyle, your sinful thoughts, and turn to the Holy God who has given his Son to forgive your sinful soul. **Make Christ your life**. There is nothing greater than to know that you can rest in the sovereign hands of God secure for all your days. Jesus alone saves. Trust in Him. Run to Him. Rest in Him. Don't spend another moment away from His grace and mercy offered at the cross.

We have just barely tasted the vastness there is in the bible on prayer. For the Christian I pray this will stir your heart to desire to dive deep into learning more about praying for God's global cause to go fourth and that we would not grow weary in doing good.

We are almost done. Now let's move to some **practical applications and results of prayer**.

1. We must seek to understand that life is war and then we battle in prayer

We live in a world saturated with being filled by entertainment and pleasure. Our culture's goal is for your belly to be filled with the finest lusts and things this life has to offer.

Often in our hearts we know the countless hours we have spent on Netflix this week, or scrolling through Facebook and Instagram, working on our golf game. And these are just examples – if you just look over your past week or month or past months since the over glorified 2021 redemption, you should be able to see the things which take priority in your life.

What was your priority these past months? If you come to realize that this life is war, we will live these short years on earth differently. We will orient our families, schedules, finances, work, school, and leisure all around how we can best give to the war effort. Namely, how we will spend our time praying that God's name would be made Holy in our hearts and in nations afar.

Seek to understand that God gives us a role in the war. He doesn't give us a line of communication to him so that we may ask for more comforts on this earth, that our houses or cars would get bigger, **but he has given us prayer to align our hearts with his mission**. He is doing something so much greater than giving more comforts in our American Christianity, *he is saving people from every nation tribe and tongue, and we have a vital role in this mission*. Faithful prayer.

2. What is our motivation in prayer?

I would say that we should pray because what if one person believes in the gospel because you prayed for them. But God gives us a bigger reason. He wants us to pray because in fervent, regular, consistent prayer we find Him there. **He says seek me and you will find me!** In

our dependance, in our needing, in our weakness and humility before the throne, He is there! He knows that our joy will never be complete until all our affections and desires are for Him to be glorified. Psalm 16:11 says, “in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore”

Do you want your joy to be complete? Get on your knees and seek him. We can only find rest in our Saviors arms, and the help in this life from God is consistent, faithful prayer.

While I was overseas, I saw the need for churches in the United States to be devoted to faithful prayer for missions and also specific missionaries they support.

My first week I was there so many realities I had forgotten about the mission field and it smacked me right in the face. Barely anyone speaks English, specifically where I was at it was very hot, poverty is through the roof with the average income of \$1000. There are so many people who will ask favors of you, or beg, or are legitimately looking for work and can't find any.

Then you have the spiritual side of things—99% of the country is Muslim, meaning they follow Islam which heavily renounces Jesus as God in any capacity.

You quickly realize in this context **that you cannot save anyone on your own efforts.** We shared the gospel with so many people, again and again we heard the same objections. God is one, God cannot have a son, Jesus cannot be God.

Along with that, these *brothers and sisters serving overseas are just like you.* They want to love their families well, they miss their extended family from home, they have issues they are dealing with their kids, kids get sick sometimes, the Dad gets malaria, balancing ministry/family life. They are just like you all, wanting the same things in God, that they would live upright and holy lives before him. It's just in a different hard context with a different language around people who have a different culture from us.

On top of all of that—these brothers and sisters are faithful in their churches; they are faithfully discipling new believers. They are printing books to share with pastors, hosting conferences, driving to new villages to preach the gospel and plant new churches.

There is much more I could go into, but I hope you realize there is a LOT that goes on overseas. It's often messy just like our lives here, but with some different hardships as well.

3. Why pray?

Ultimately **pray for the glory of God to be done in these places.** We know God will work. As you pray you can have confidence that you are joining in on the war effort to see the greatest gift proclaimed in the darkest places.

When you pray it could be that the Lord uses something specific in a missionary's time reading the word that day to encourage them to stay on the field instead of leaving. When you pray it could be that the Lord heals another local believer or missionary from malaria. When you pray it

could be that the Lord opens up a young English students' heart to understand the gospel for the first time and believe. When you pray it could be that you send a text of encouragement to a believer on the field, "hey, I'm praying for you today." That helps them get through some family problems they are dealing with or just a rough day in the heat.

We do not know all the exact details God the Father is working out when we pray. **But when we pray for God's mission and His people it is not meaningless.** It is for a purpose, and He will be glorified in that, and you will find joy in faithful prayer.

I saw so many encouraging things overseas as well. The team I was with was faithful to preach the gospel. We preached to as many people who would listen. Often, we would simply start the conversation with, "are you a Muslim? I am a Christian."

A man who is a good friend of mine had been hearing the gospel for four years up to this point in 2019 when I went the first time. He would come over to my house and we would eat food together. Even one time he brought the Jesus film to my house, and we watched it together. He knew the gospel; he knew the stories. His Aunt who raised him was like a mother to him. She was an Islamic teacher and was the right-hand man of the president in their religious endeavors. Earlier in 2020 she ended up passing away. One month later the Lord appointed for my friend to be baptized. He fully embraced the gospel in the Lord timing and took a huge leap in a Muslim culture, baptism.

When I came to his church it was so beautiful to see his heart change. When it came to prayer time, he said he was thankful I was there and had come back to Africa. He was praying, he was leading kids in bible stories, he was doing the work of the Lord right there in his own town. It is a true blessing in my life to have seen the Lord do this transformative work in my friends' life.

There is so much more that happened—so please feel free to come ask me questions about the sermon or about my time overseas. I do welcome all questions after the service.

I know prayer is hard, and it'll take work. But nothing good in this life is easy. I know it's counter-cultural to pray and to give up things in this life so we may pray and glorify God.

I want each of you to find one person or one family per family in this church that is a member here and ask them to keep you accountable to praying weekly or daily for the nations. That every time you enter these doors you would find them and ask them how their prayer has been this week, and even pray together for the nations here in this building. And that this desire to pray for the nations would be fleshed out in our homegroups.

I look forward to the day, that because of our faithful going, sending, and praying—that one day, people from Niger, India, Russia, USA, and all the ends of the earth are standing around the

throne proclaiming, “**Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty!**” and finally our joy will be complete in the Lord.

Let pray.