

## The Abiding Presence of God

JB | February 4, 2024

Matthew 28:20

### Matthew 28:18-20

*“And Jesus came and said to them (His disciples), ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”*

This morning, we will consider four meditations on the presence of God.

1. **Our Fallen State Has Separated Us from God’s Presence**
2. **Christ Is Our Hope to Bring Us to God’s Presence**
3. **Christians Will Find True Joy in God’s Presence**
4. **Our Task: We Must Help Others Abide in God’s Presence Eternally**

[**Introduction**] These four meditations will point us to the abiding presence of God in God’s mission to save people from the whole world. This will happen first because partaking and enjoying God’s salvation leads us to action. We cannot taste of the gift of salvation and neglect to share it with everyone around us in dying world. Look at Matthew 28:18, Jesus all-encompassing authority, on heaven and earth, leads us into confident action to the nations. This word nations in the Greek is Ethne which is where we get our word ethnic. So this gospel goes to all ethnic peoples. And as we go to the nations, verse 19, we make disciples, we preach the gospel, we call everyone to repentance and baptize them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Verse 20 shows us that we are to teach them to observe and obey all that Jesus commanded for life and godliness. Finally, we also receive a promise, that Jesus is always with us, to the end of the age.

Jesus’s promise of his abiding presence is unmistakably connected with the obedience of making disciples from all nations. As we partake in the greatest task our Lord has given the church, we confidently know He is with us always.

My prayer is that we give our lives in faithful obedience to Christ’s command to make disciples wherever we are. If we go, in our going, if we stay, in our staying, **our goal is obedience to the King**, the amazing promise is Christ will be with us through it all. Isaiah says he will never leave nor forsake us.

These meditations are intimately related with Matthew 28:18-20, that as we go to the nations, under the authority of Christ Jesus, we make new disciples and teach them to obey all Christ commanded, he will be with us.

With this in mind, let’s consider our first meditation this morning.

#### 1. **Our Fallen State Has Separated Us from God’s Presence**

[**Introduction**] I wonder if I asked you, **what is the great problem facing humanity today**, I wonder what you would say. In 2021 there was research conducted on 19 thousand adults by the World Economic Forum. They asked all of them what are the top three things which worry them the most in their country. The top three responses had large majorities agreeing that Covid-19 was of biggest concern. Another top worry for people was unemployment. And the last was Poverty & social inequality. And this makes sense to us, we all have concern over our physical health, a majority of us have concerns about where our money will come from to provide for our families, and of course we care about those who are poor and impoverished.

But these things are not the biggest problem facing humanity. There is a greater problem that humanity has faced ever since Adam and Eve. A greater illness, greater impoverishment. This problem is the all-pervasive disease of sin and death, the curse that is found in every person who has ever lived. In the Garden of Eden,

Adam and Eve had harmonious relationship with God until sadly, they broke that relationship by sinning against Holy God. From that moment, sin nature was passed down to every person who was born.

In the garden, humans were made in the image of God, and Adam had intimate relationship with God. We were created to be in perfect relationship with our God, but our father Adam sadly chosen sin and therefore our whole nature became corrupted, and we could not dwell in the presence of holy God who is sinless. The Psalmist confirms this in Chapter 53, “*There is none who does good, not even one.*” Consider Isaiah 59:2, “*...your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God...*” Because of our sin and utter rebellion, God must deal justly with our sin, “*...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*” Hebrews 9:22.

This is the reality of your sin and my sin. Nobody is escaping these consequences. Our Fallen State has truly separated us from God’s abiding presence. Because of our sinful nature and sinful acts defiling us, there is nothing we could do or offer to God to mend this broken relationship. Listen, we are deserving of judgement and hell for eternity because of our rebellion. Truly this is the biggest problem facing our world today. And for those who have tasted of the salvation of Jesus we are about to talk of in a minute, our hearts break to hear and even try to comprehend that there are 3.2 billion people right now, who have little to no access to the gospel at all. 3.2 billion people. Without access to the gospel. These people will likely be born into large families, practice damning religions, and die and plunge into hell for all eternity. Almost all of them never having the opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ or to ever meet a Christian who could tell them. Can you even imagine this? That there are people, living right now at this very moment a few thousand miles away, who do not have access to the good news that they can be saved from all their sins for God for eternity. Nobody to tell them. And yet here we are, in a church building, a place that prizes the gospel, full of believers who understand the gospel, sings the gospel, preach the good news, love the good news, 52 weeks out of the year.

It’s imperative that we are awake to the reality that there are 3 billion people who do not have access to a church, Christian, or anything that they could learn about Christ. There are real people, with real souls, who will really be judged forever in hell without trusting in Christ for salvation. They are still separated from the hope of God and His presence. Having no hope that God’s presence should ever be attained again.

In light of our fallen state, we come to the second meditation of hope in Christ.

## **2. Christ Is Our Hope to Bring Us to God’s Presence**

But God is not surprised by our sinful choice to rebel against his good commands. Throughout the whole rest of the Biblical narrative God is continuing to fulfill his promise of Genesis 3:15, that there would be a head crusher who would redeem man’s fallen state. We see it continue throughout the promise to Abraham, that all nations would be blessed by God’s covenant with Abraham. And then this promise is ultimately fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus. Listen to how Jesus is described in the first two chapters of Luke, Christ is Prophesied, Christ is King, Christ is Son of The Most High, Christ is Lord, Eternal, Holy, Son of God, Lord, Savior, Christ the Lord, Savior, Redeemer, Obedient. We understand from the Life of Christ that he is perfect; he has power of demons and illnesses; he has power even over creation to stop the waves. Jesus fulfills the Law and The Prophets, and, in the gospels, we see him establish His Rule and Reign and Kingdom. Even though Jesus did amazing things on this earth, his ultimate goal was to seek and save the lost, Luke 19:10, And thereby fulfill all God had promised.

A helpful quote from Stephen Wellum, he says, “Jesus *is* the divine Son, the second person of the triune Godhead, the Lord of glory, who in time assumed a human nature, so that now and forevermore he is the eternal “Word made flesh” (jn 1:1). And he did this because it is only one individual-God the Son incarnate-who can bring about God’s eternal plan by securing our redemption, executing judgement on sin, and establishing a new creation by the ratification of a new covenant in his life, death, and resurrection. For this reason, the Jesus of the Bible who is the true Jesus is unique, exclusive, and the only Lord and Savior.” For we know there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved, except the Lord Jesus.

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” – Ephesians 2:8.*

Only in Jesus paying our debt, and we look upon Him in faith can we be saved. Jesus died so that we would be saved from our sins, that we would be given Christ righteousness and brought back into God’s presence, and now the scriptures tell us, *“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16.*

This is the hope we have that we are restored to God’s abiding presence, that at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For those who are in Christ, their passageway to be with God is safe and secure. Jesus says in the sermon on the mount, *“Blessed are pure in heart, for they shall see God.”* This is a promise for all of those who trust in Jesus today that Christ will give them a pure heart and they will see God and live in his presence forever more.

**[Application]** Have you believed upon Jesus to be saved? Have you placed your full trust in Him? Have you been born again into Jesus’s kingdom of grace?

Some may say, after college and having some fun, I will give my life to Christ. Others may say in retirement I will take more seriously the things of God. **Friend, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.** That is today. You have no clue if you shall live or die tomorrow. You cannot keep your heart beating at this moment. Even the air you breathe is of common grace from God. Turn now and believe, for time is short and his return is soon. There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved. This is the hope God has given us. He has given his best to save us. Jesus Christ. Turn and believe in Him today, that you may be saved.

For all who are in Christ today they have the secure promise of Jesus’s presence. Remember Matthew 28:20, *“Behold I am with you always, until the end of the age.”* This is Jesus’s personal assurance that he will be with.

**When you are struggling in your faith,** Jesus is right there with you.

**When you don’t know how you can survive the day,** Jesus is with you.

**When your kids continue to be disobedient and a pain,** Jesus is with you.

**As you sit with a loved one in the hospital,** Jesus is with you.

**As the diagnoses comes from the doctors,** Jesus is with you.

**As your family members reject and revile you,** Jesus is with you.

**As you lose your job for the witness of Christ,** Jesus is with you.

**And as you face the wave of death,** Jesus is with you.

Christian, be WHOLE-heartily assured, that your loving savior is with you always. He promises. He will never leave nor forsake you. He withholds no good from you. Trust that he is with you in every way.

**When you feel lonely,** remind yourself, Jesus is with me.

**When you don’t feel like working hard at your job,** remember, Jesus is with you.

**When your conscience condemns you,** and you feel the guilt of your sin, remember, Jesus is with you.

**When in the middle of the night, that inward temptation comes to sin against God,** remember, Jesus is with you.

Charles Spurgeon commentates on Matthew 28:20, *“If we know that Jesus is with us, every power will be developed, and every grace will be strengthened, and we shall cast ourselves into the Lord’s service with heart, and soul, and strength; therefore is the presence of God to be desired above all things. His presence will be most realized by those who are most like Him. If you desire to see Christ, you must grow in conformity to Him. Bring yourself, by the power of the Spirit, into union with Christ’s desires, and motives, and plans of action, and you are likely to be favored with His company.”*

In light of our fallen nature being redeemed by Christ, we turn to the joy Christians find in God’s abiding presence.

### 3. Christians Will Find True Joy in God’s Presence

The world is seeking for pleasure everywhere. If you just lift your eyes out these doors back here, you will see people seeking for pleasure. If that's overeating, lottery tickets, nicotine is often the legal choice drug to numb the pain of life for people. Pornography is rampant, leading to more sex crimes daily, suicides, murders. Sex addiction is also rampant, with many diseases coming forth from that sin, not to mention the killing of innocent children in abortion. Night clubs continue to remain full. Frat parties continue to serve underage minors drinks. Bars are still highly attended. And with all of this, families continue to be broken by the choices all these people are seeking to find pleasure in. And yet, they continue to purchase, buy, spend their money and lives away for things that will only continue to let them down and never fully satisfy.

But for those who are in Christ, Psalm 16 teaches us about a lasting pleasure, a fullness of joy. Listen to Psalm 16:8, *"I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my HEART IS GLAD, AND MY WHOLE BEING REJOICES; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; IN YOUR PRESENCE THERE IS FULLNESS OF JOY; AT YOUR RIGHT HAND ARE PLEASURES FOREVER."*

I want to be fully convinced of this truth. **There is pleasure forevermore in my God!** *"For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness."* Psalm 84:10.

Here is another scripture that should lead us to joy. *"...in love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."* Ephesians 1:4-10.

In love he adopted us, this was according to his eternal purposes, for his glory and praise. This verse continues to give us reasons we can have joy. We have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, how is this possible? The riches of his grace, the abundance of his wealth, he lavished grace upon us, in all of God's wisdom and insight, he made known the things which were once in types and shadows, now are unmistakably clear in His son Jesus Christ. And this was always his plan, that he would set Christ forth, to unite all things in Him.

Hebrews 9:23 tells us that Christ has entered into heaven and appears before the presence of God on our behalf.

**[Illustration]** You've probably seen this video on social media, but if you haven't, there is this video where a dad does sort of a social experiment on his kid. The video starts and the dad is very explicit and explains to his son, who is probably 5, he explains as he places down \$10,000 that he can choose the \$10,000, or he could choose these fresh, just out of the package, two Oreo cookies. It doesn't take the boy even two seconds to think over his options, he chooses the cookies. The dad asks, are you sure? \$10,000 or the cookies? And again, the boy chooses the cookies.

Now say, theoretically, God places a vast wealth of treasures on your table, let's say \$10,000, and then your sins you've ran to this week or month, the sins you secretly do, which would you choose? Your sin? Or the wealth and treasure found that can only be found in God?

For the believer, we have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places according to Ephesians 1:3. This is the picture I want you to think of when you're tempted to sin, do you want to delight in God himself, keep his commandments, or choose your sin. When you choose sin, you are not delighting in or seeking to be fully satisfied in the treasures God has to offer.

We are far too easily pleased with the things of this world! When we choose our sin, we essentially take the two Oreos instead of the wealth and vast treasures available in God. And you could say, well, the boy in the video doesn't understand the weightiness of the money, its value, its fiscal ability to purchase 20,000 more cookies. Yet, we are often the same. When we neglect God's word, we neglect his commands, we neglect to spend time

with him, when we don't pray, we don't truly understand the weightiness of God's goodness to us in Christ. We don't understand God's value, so to speak. We don't understand his goodness toward his Children. Therefore, the Christian seeks to take our full enjoyment and satisfaction, not in the sugar cookies of this life, but in God himself. The famous catechism says the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. This is what we were created for, don't settle to be easily satisfied by the Oreos of this life! Seek out every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. When Christians put off the flesh and come to God, they find joy forevermore, peace, abiding love in Christ, and a vast wealth of eternal treasures of delight in their God. How do we do this?

### [Application]

We will grow our joy in Christ by being obedient to all of his commands. Do you want to be happy? Do you want to have joy? Have you sought for joy elsewhere and been left empty? Go to the Lord in private prayer, find your joy there with Him. We will grow our joy in Christ by spending time with him.

Jesus says in John 15:4, *"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."*

John 15:8 *"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."*

Let us abide in Christ. We need to draw near to Him and abide with Him by reading our bibles, praying, fasting, sharing the gospel, making disciples. This is the process of becoming a whole believer and loving the Lord God with your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The Christian cries out to God for a heart to love the things of God, to love reading his word, to love praying, to love discipleship, to love their neighbor by taking them the gospel. Abiding in His love.

What does abiding look like? A Puritan once said, it isn't the mere passing of the bee that draws out the nectar of the flower, but the bee **abiding** with the flower for some time that draws out the sweet of the flower.

Seek daily to spend time with the Lord. **It is an intentional abiding with Christ that brings about joy.**

-Just as a steady diet of food and water nourishes and establishes the flesh to be strong, so also a steady diet of God's word brings about strength and dependence in God that nourishes our souls. Therefore, commune with God each day and ask him to lead you to himself.

We need to stop living as if we are on spiritual welfare. We are not! Psalm 16 shows us pleasures and joy forevermore. Ephesians 1, he has lavished grace upon grace on us, in verse 3 of Ephesians 1 he says that we have been blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Church, we are Spiritual Billionaires! Elon Musk's wealth has nothing on us. We have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places! So let us come to our Father of grace, find every joy, and need unrestrained from His hand, He loves His children and by Christ he loves you who are in Christ.

Another way to grow in love with Christ, is to devote yourself to this local church and its members. Seek to come early, be a contributor, ask how you can help, or who you can meet with. God will help us grow in Joy as we consider others more than ourselves and seek to love and serve them. This is not a place where we come to just get the sermon and leave, we are here to contribute to each other's godliness, joy, and abiding with Christ.

Brothers and sisters, since we have received salvation by grace, we must strive to be fully convinced that there is no other place for the Christian except in the presence of God. The Christian will never be truly happy anywhere else except in close, intimate relationship with God. Only in Christ is there true joy.

Seeing that Christ has redeemed us from our fallen state, that we can find true joy in Christ, now our redemption and joy will lead us to the ends of the earth in the pursuit of fulfilling the task our Lord has set before us.

**For our last meditation, turn to Revelation chapter 7**

#### **4. Our Task: We Must Help Others Abide in God's Presence Eternally**

Listen to the picture we have of the end of time. Revelation 7:9 and following, “...I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb! And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Revelation chapter 7 shows us that God will gather, from the nations, a multitude of numberless people from every nation and all tribes and peoples and languages. Church, our duty from Matthew 28:18-20 is to make disciples of all nations because the Lamb was slain and has all authority! We are promised that brothers and sisters from all nations will be there. Revelation 7 will happen!

**[Illustration]** In a recent sermon, I heard David Platt talk about how his family was moved at that specific time in their life to adopt a young boy. At the time this boy was three years old. It was January 2020, and they had their bags packed and they were just a few days away from going and picking up their new son. But they received the call that they would be delayed three weeks because of this new virus that was going around the world. Three and a half years later, in June of 2023, they finally were able to go get their son and bring him home.

I remember so vividly there was a picture of the first time David, and his son were in their living room, and they were face to face for the first time. Finally, after many years of waiting, they were together. And there was this amazing joy you could feel.

**[Application]** Church, as we make disciples of all nations, brothers and sisters who have yet to hear and believe, as we proclaim the gospel, we get to receive the joy of holding their hand as we bring them into the glory of God.

We have this amazing opportunity to bring them FACE TO FACE with our God! Where they will experience pleasures forever more! Be saved from their sin and hell! And they will rejoice forever at the Lamb and his glorious salvation.

Our labors in making disciples in our local churches, supporting those who go to missions, and giving our lives for the gospel to go to all nations, is an outflow of the salvation and joy in the presence of God we already experience today. We are taking this joy and salvation to those who don't know of it yet but will experience it when they believe.

Revelation 7:13-17, “Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, ‘who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come? I said to him, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

*Therefore they are before the throne of God,*

*And serve him day and night in his temple;*

*And he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.*

*They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;*

*The sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.*

*For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,*

*And he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

Church, LONG for the day where all our brothers and sisters, including ourselves, and those yet to hear, **will be sheltered in the presence of God forever.** What a thought!

We must give everything to see the lost hear the gospel so they no longer hunger or thirst, the sun shall not strike them nor scorching heat. The Lamb will be their shepherd.

And every tear will be wiped from our eyes.

God's promises are not like our promises, He keeps His promises.

Will you give your life to see your brothers and sisters come to know this salvation? Will you share the joy inexpressible with them?

Will you sacrifice your sleep to pray for them day and night? That they might come into the presence of God forever?

\*Will you sacrificially give your money, time and even your life to see that these brothers and sisters will be brought into God's fold?

Our efforts in the Great Commission will be chiefly motivated because WE LOVE GOD! Nothing else will lead us to give our lives for others except for being in love with Christ.

We want to be sold out for the Lord! Crying out God make my life count! Don't let me waste my life. Lead me to your chosen fold that you are calling to yourself. Make me an instrument of your glory. We have been purchased by your blood and we want to live for your glory among the nations. Don't let us sit on our hands but let us be the church empowered by your spirit to the end of all nations hearing the gospel.

### Application

In application of these four meditations – very clearly for the church and God's people, **1.** Let's make disciples! We want to make disciples of the nations, and we also want to make disciples right here in this church. Jesus promised he would bless the institution of his church, and so when we follow his command to make disciples, I believe there will be spiritual flourishing happening within the church.

Discipleship will take humility from both young and mature believers. And maybe you're saying, I don't know how to do discipleship? That's not completely true. Jesus is clear in his great commission; we make disciples by – teaching them to obey all that God has commanded. Essentially, we are helping each other walk in stride with obeying the commands of Christ and trying to walk faithful to his calling on our lives to be sanctified.

Discipleship will be hard sometimes, there will be confession, repentance, seemingly intruding accountability, but for the true believer it will bring about a flourishing spiritual life. So Older men, disciple younger. Younger men, seek out older. Older women, disciple younger women. Younger women, seek out older. As we practice discipleship, Jesus promises to be with us, and we will see the church flourish.

Dads, seek to disciple your kids by reading them God's word, praying with them, loving your wife well. Moms, seek to disciple your kids by reading God's word, praying with them, and loving your husband well. Parents, if your highest joy is not being in the presence of God, your kids will know. Exemplify your highest joy and love is in Christ. Maybe you've never done that before. Maybe you never have prayed in front of your kids or prayed with your spouse. If you have never done discipleship before, now is the perfect time to start. It does not need to be complex or lengthy, but it does need to be intentional. Go deep into God's word, ask him for help to understand, pray and seek his face daily. Don't wait a minute longer, pray to the Lord to give you a heart to love your neighbor and bring yourself and others into the presence of God. Then, in your workplaces, be faithful to share this good news. One of the greatest tools you have been given by God is your testimony. Even if someone rejects the gospel, rejects the name of Christ, they cannot easily reject the true work God has done in your life. By you telling them, that you once were separated from God, seeking the things of this world, living for yourself, but now you have been redeemed by God through his Son's death, and now you live for Him. If that is true, nobody can deny it. Use your testimony as an opportunity to share the gospel with others. If we continue to be faithful to God's command, share the gospel and make disciples, everyone here has the opportunity to bring future brothers and sisters into the love relationship with Christ. Where they will experience joy forever more and find forgiveness of their sins. In the end of time, striving towards this goal will be one of the worthiest things we do. Each person is a potential brother or sister in Christ.

**2.** We leverage our lives to see the unreached come into God's fold. We want to leverage our lives to see unreached and lost come into God's kingdom. Become God's children.

**[Illustration]** If we see a blind man walking toward a cliff, and he continues walking toward the cliff, and we do nothing; we then believe one of two things. We believe he can save himself from falling off the cliff, or we believe that the fall isn't really that bad. If we will not go and stop him from falling off the cliff, inherently we believe he can save himself or it really isn't that bad of a fall.

Hell is real, people are plunging into hell every day. Eternal, anguishing, deserved, rightful judgement for their sins. Yet, if we neglect to tell others about the gospel, for any reason whatsoever, **we think that they can either save themselves, or that hell really isn't that bad.**

This is why we must leverage our lives to see the unreached hear the gospel, because there are men and women falling into hell and there was nobody even there to tell them that they can be saved from their sins by Jesus Christ.

We cannot be silent, we cannot be still, if you have tasted of the sweetness of salvation, imperative with your call to bear your cross and come to Christ is the same call to take the gospel to everyone around you. So don't neglect the urgency of this call of the great commission. Hell is real, it's soon for a lot of people you know, wide is its path, yet great is the Savior's love to save any who will believe on Him.

**3-**Let us consider how we can stir up one another to do the good works of the Lord. We as a community of believers know one another's strengths and weaknesses. Let's encourage one another in the gifts we have been given by God. Some that may be teaching, some encouraging, some in gifted discipleship, some in praying, some in leading, some in organization. When we see these things in each other, go out of your way to admonish and encourage that brother or sister in the good gift you see. I pray the Lord from this message will stir in our hearts to consider how we can leverage our workplace, hobby, and academic skills to see the nations reached with the gospel. That more of us would consider how we can use our skills and talents to make his name known where it is not. Thinking, how can I use my accounting degree so others can hear the gospel in unreached places? How can I use my nursing skills? How can I use my interest in business, forestry, communications, foreign languages, photography, planning, project management, teaching. How can I use this for the glory of God so others may hear and live in the gospel? How can I use my education? Can I go study abroad in an unreached place and be a witness for Christ on campus? And together again as a community, we can help each other think through those things. This person seems very gifted in xyz, have they ever thought about leveraging that for the unreached?

**4-** For parents, I want to challenge us with our children, we do well in educating them and putting before them sports and all kinds of activities. But I want to challenge us to read missionary biographies to our children. Read faithful men and women like Whitfield and Edwards, Paton and Adoniram and Ann Judson. Read missionary biographies and put them Infront of our children, so they can have the opportunity to think and imagine, could the Lord use my life in such a way? Is this what the Lord would have for my life? It was hard, there was loss, but they trusted God.

And then church, when a 15-year-old decides, I want to live my life for the glory of God on the international mission field, may our first response not be, "but there are lost people here in my work and town." This is true, and that's why God has you in your work and town.

We should never want to discourage this person's leading from God to send laborers into the harvest fields. From that point we should work diligently to see this person or child trained in the word of the Lord in hopes of God taking them to the nations where he has never been named. This was the ambition of Paul and a good ambition to give our lives to.

**5-** A quick word of caution before we end; We need to be careful that we do not become too comfortable in this life. For those who have been saved by Jesus, we no longer live only in light of this momentary life. But we live in light of the eternal life that will far outlast this vapor of a life we live. We need to remind one another regularly of the lost, heaven, of hell, of God's eternal purposes in sending Jesus, of His great commission plans,



of his glory spreading to all peoples. We should never be too comfortable in this life because this life is preparation for the eternal life ahead. Jesus's great commission is to spur us into action, to lead us to the lost neighbors near and far, to help us to think differently about how we live our lives to the Kingdom of God. If we live in light of eternity, we will be more generous in our time that we give, our talents that we have, and our money God has given us to steward.

**[Conclusion]** Church today, I feel that we should be convinced in that there will be no higher joy or calling in this life than the one the Lord has put for his church, to make disciples of all nations. I cannot think of a sweeter reality than even the opportunity of life of faithful labor unto the Lord for His glory to go to the lost. Devote your life to see those around you discipled. And understand, the Lord Jesus is with you.

Let's remember our sinful state of separation from God. We could do nothing ourselves to be made right with him. Let's remember the great exchange of our savior, for those in Christ he has brought us into God's presence by his own righteousness.

And then in the hope of the future rejoicing around the throne of God, let's devote our lives to pursuing a pleasure that will never fade in Christ, and let that fuel our desire to hold our future brother or sisters' hand into glory to meet face to face with God, forever.

To finish this morning, I want us to hear on some words written from a fellow sister who lost her life as a martyr. Her name is Karen Watson. Karen was from California and one of the four Southern Baptist relief workers killed by unknown gunmen in Iraq in 2004. Before leaving, Karen knew the risks of going and left a letter sealed for her pastor marked, "Open in case of death."

"When God calls there are no regrets," Karen famously said in the letter. She also wrote "I tried to share my heart with you as much as possible, my heart for the nations. I wasn't called to a place; I was called to Him. To obey was my objective, to suffer was expected, His glory my reward, His glory my reward." Karen is now with our faithful Father and brother, Jesus Christ, in his full presence, experiencing joys forever more.

May our lives be lived as the Fusion Creed, inspired by her later states:

As a follower of Christ: I am called not to comfort or success but to obedience. Consequently, my life is to be defined not by what I do but by who I am.

Henceforth: I will proclaim His name without fear, follow Him without regret and serve Him without compromise.

Thus: To obey is my objective, to suffer is expected, His glory is my reward.

Therefore: To Christ alone be all power, all honor and all glory, that the world may know. Amen!

May our whole devotion be faithfulness unto the Lord Jesus and to his great commission on our lives. May we seek to enjoy God and look forward to enjoying his presence with countless brothers and sisters for eternity.