

# What Is God Doing In The World Today ?

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Well, I don't know if Brother Allen knew my text before this morning or not, but that last song reminds me of why we're here today.
- I'm here to proclaim the glory of the Lord. And what an honor it is that I get to stand in Pastor Kyle's stead today because I want to bring to you greetings from brothers and sisters at the First Baptist Church of Prattville, Alabama.
- Our city is in the center of our state. It's not the center of the universe, but it does have a special place in our hearts. And we're honored today that we get to come and partner with you and to be a part of what God is doing in Scotland.
- So thank you for the opportunity. And I would like to just begin with a moment of prayer. Our Father, we thank you again that you are revealing your glory.
- We thank you that in this place today we've lifted up your praises. We've been reminded of the power of your word to connect us with you and with your purposes. So, God, we pray that in these moments all we say and do will honor you.
- [ 1 : 14 ] We are listening to you, Lord, and to your word. It's in the powerful name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Well, my name is Larry Jenkins, and I have the privilege of serving with First Baptist Church in Prattville, Alabama.
- I have been on staff for 25 years in August. It seems only yesterday when I first came to the church, I was the student pastor and was in that role for 14 years.
- And now I'm in the role of missions pastor. And I get to guide our church family in carrying out what I believe Jesus gave to all of us, a commission.
- And I'm going to be speaking about that in just a little bit. To begin with, though, I want to ask a question. What is God doing in the world today? You know, we began this decade in a kind of a shaky position, didn't we?
- When COVID took over the world and we all stopped to think about health and we started looking at a lot of things that we couldn't control, people were reminded, yeah, we live busy lives, but there are bigger things at work around us.
- [ 2 : 25 ] And COVID slowed us all down. We had to stop and think about things differently. But since that time, in the past five years, there's been a lot of turmoil in our world.
- And I know if you're like me and you watch some of the news, there are not many days that there's encouraging things that we hear about from around the world. In fact, just in 2024, we saw civil wars in Afghanistan.
- We saw Ethiopia imploding. We saw Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Yemen, Sudan, South Sudan, all experiencing war. And then there's the war in Ukraine and the war between Israel and Hamas and now Israel and Iran.
- So many actions that are happening. And we wonder, what is God doing in the world? There seems to be so much chaos. But I want to remind each of us today, we serve a sovereign God.
- God, the one that is in control. And so, because he's in control, let's take a moment to look at some things that God is doing in the world.

[ 3 : 35 ] What is God doing at work in the world today? Well, I believe, first of all, he is working out his purpose. And Pastor Cal read about that for us from Habakkuk 2.14.

Let's read that again, please. Habakkuk 2.14. And I'd like to invite you to read along with me. Brother Stephen, if we can put that screen there. So reading together.

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2.14.

This, I believe, is God's purpose for the world. That the world would reflect his glory. But we have to pause and ask ourselves, is this happening right now?

We just spoke about our world is at war in so many places. There's chaos in individual lives because of the power of sin. Yeah, there are things that are wrong with the world, but the world is reflecting this purpose of God.

[ 4 : 40 ] That the knowledge of the glory of the Lord would be known throughout all of the world. The scriptures remind us, God created the world and everything in it for his glory.

And so we need to pause and ask, what does that phrase mean? The glory of the Lord. Well, we could spend a whole hour on that, Pastor Cal, but instead, let's just talk about a couple of things.

First, that from the Hebrew word kavod, the glory of God really means the importance and the weight, the honor that is due to God.

The term glory of God reflects not only who God is, but what God does. We began this hour being reminded that the creation, all of the heavens are telling the glories of God.

Day after day, they pour forth speech. So we do see what God has done is reflecting his glory, but what God is doing reflects his glory.

[ 5 : 48 ] The beauty of a beauty of a newborn child. The glory of God reflected in his handiwork. We see the goodness of God, the character of God as we read about him in his word.

The glory of God is being reflected, but the picture is not yet complete. Because of the brokenness of our world and because of our sinful nature, sin is reflecting another story.

And yet this morning, we recognize a sovereign God desires for all of creation to reflect him. That all of creation, every life, would be reflecting the goodness of God, the nature of God, the worth of God.

When Moses cried out, God, show me your glory. Do you remember the story? Then in Exodus 33, I know you guys were looking at Exodus last year.

Exodus 33, Moses is allowed to see not the full-on glory of God because he wouldn't be able to comprehend it. He wouldn't be able to experience it. But God placed him in a cleft of a rock.

[ 7 : 06 ] And God passed by. And he allowed Moses just to see the glimpse of the back of God moving through. And Moses was overwhelmed by this.

He could not look on the full glory of God. And yet, we have the privilege of reflecting that glory to the world.

The hymn writer, one of my favorites, said, Oh, Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds your hands have made.

I see the stars and I hear the rolling thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed. Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee, how great thou art.

How great thou art. Those who have experienced the glory of God cry out and want to reflect the glory of God in every place that we go.

[ 8 : 07 ] But we also want to see God's purpose carried out so that others can know the glory of God. And what is that fullest expression of the glory of God?

It is the person of his son, Jesus. God sent his son, Jesus, into the world, the fullest expression of his glory. And his very presence, Jesus, was reflecting who God is and what God does.

And John tells us in John 1.14, The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory. Glory as of the only son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

When we share with others who Jesus is, they begin to see a glimpse of the glory of God. When their lives are convicted of their need for Jesus and they turn from sin and trust in him, then they too are reflecting the glory of God.

And so, one day, the world will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea. That day is coming.

[ 9 : 23 ] It has not come to pass yet. So God is working in this world to bring about that purpose, that we, his followers, and that all of creation would reflect his glory.

But this morning, let me also assure you of something else that God is doing. Not only is he bringing about his purpose of us reflecting his glory, but God is bringing about his purpose for the world through a vision.

A vision that John shares about in Revelation 7, verses 9 and 10. Let's look at that scripture together. Revelation 7. After this, 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 out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

Now, God has a vision for the nations. And this scripture from Revelation reminds us that John's vision will be the fulfillment of Habakkuk's vision.

The glory of the Lord will be fully expressed in every place. And before the throne of God, there will be people from every language, tongue, and tribe.

[ 11 : 01 ] And they will be worshiping the Lord who is worthy, the one who brings salvation. He is the only one worthy. Will this vision come to pass?

Yes. The answer is yes. Has it come to pass yet? And the answer is not yet. Why? We ask ourselves, why has this not come to pass?

Well, the fact of the matter, the world is broken, sin fills hearts, and there are many who still have not heard. Many across our world have not had opportunity to hear yet this gospel message of Jesus, this message that brings life and hope, and that would bring them to that place before the throne one day.

Joshua Project is a research group among believers, and they number something above 17,000 language groups in our world. And of these, about 7,400 of them are considered unreached.

Now, that term literally is meaning that there's less than 2% followers of Jesus among that people group. That seems a tough number, but at 2%, that should be a number strong enough that their people could reach their own people.

[ 12 : 28 ] Okay? So that's where the term comes from. But 7,400 of these are considered unreached, and of those, there are another about 3,000 that are unengaged.

That means there's no one who is coming to that group to try to share the message of hope. There's no one that is able to go to that people group and to share the good news about Jesus.

And with the fact that the gospel has been preached for 2,000 years, why are there still 3,000 people groups who have never heard?

Well, first of all, they have no Bible in their language. Can you imagine? Can you imagine? If we didn't have the Bible available to us in our heart language, how would we hear?

How could we know this grace of God? We've been blessed in that we have not only English available to us, but we have many different translations where we can compare and we can study God's word on our own.

[ 13 : 35 ] But 3,000 people groups still lack a Bible in their heart language. I have a friend that serves in the nation of Indonesia.

There are 700 languages in their nation. Now, it's a nation made up of many islands, a few more actually than Scotland has, Jeremiah.

And Indonesia has 700 languages that still have no Bible in their heart language. So that means not only do they not have God's word, but they probably have limited access to the gospel.

In many of these 3,000 people groups that don't know about Jesus, there's no near culture even that is able to come and to share with them about Jesus.

So no Bible, limited access, and no near culture that's able to come and share with them. How will they hear? How will the vision that God has for all peoples be represented before his throne, how will that vision come to pass?

[ 14 : 47 ] Well, I can assure you of this. Our God is at work in his world, bringing about his plan for his people.

You see, if God only wanted us to be saved, to become his children, then we might as well go to heaven as soon as we turn from sin and trust in Christ.

But there's a bigger plan. God plans that you and I would be the ones that are obedient, and we join him in his work.

Some time ago, God pressed on my heart that not only am I blessed to be called to be a part of his family, but I am blessed to be called to join him in his work.

That's the purpose of every believer, that we would be obedient in joining him in his work. And so we're going to remind ourselves of what we hear in the Great Commission.

[ 15 : 56 ] Matthew 28, 18 through 20. This is God's plan for his people. And would you read this passage with me? Let's read aloud together.

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. Now, if you remember the setting for these words, Jesus is with his disciples.

He's about to be taken up to heaven. And he's reminding his disciples one last time, This is my plan for you.

But Jesus didn't speak this just to 11 men on a hillside. He spoke through the ages to us through his word. And he gives us this command. We're commissioned to join him in his work.

[ 17 : 11 ] And so let's consider why. And let's consider how. First of all, Jesus has all authority. Would we agree? He has all authority, not only because of who he is, but because of what he has done.

He has conquered sin and death. And he has come to this earth to invite us to join him in his work. And so the scripture tells us, Jesus has all authority.

And now go. He's speaking to you and to me. Now, go doesn't have to be something that seems other side of the world.

Go can be it. Go across the street. Right? As we go, where we go, in our lives, we are to go with the purpose of joining God in his work.

And so Jesus says, All authority is mine. And so I'm commanding you to join me. I'm commanding you to go. And literally, we must have the intention that our lives will make a difference.

[ 18 : 19 ] As a teacher, as a teacher, as a nurse, as a doctor, as an engineer, as a laborer, as a retired person, any opportunity that we have in our lives currently, we are called to be intentional in our daily lives to go.

And in that going, we build relationships. And we share the hope of Jesus. And we let people see a life that is committed to following Jesus.

Not just knowing about Jesus, but following him. And so that leads us to the next part of the commission. That we go and we make disciples.

Making disciples is something that first requires that we become a disciple. And what does that word mean? We are a learner. And we are a follower.

Literally, as a rabbi, Jesus taught as he walked. And his disciples walked with him everywhere. And as Jesus is teaching them, they're committing to memory the words of Jesus.

[ 19 : 30 ] And they're having discussion about what does this word mean. And they talk among themselves as we overhear some of those conversations in the scripture. And they speak back to the master. Master, what does this mean?

Tell us about this parable. Tell us why you taught in this way. And so, a disciple is a learner and a follower. So it takes both mental effort and physical effort.

That we teach others by our words and by our examples to follow Jesus. And we invite friends and family to come along with us on this journey of making disciples.

So we go, we make disciples, but we have another specification here. And that is, our work, God's work, will take us to all nations.

To all nations in the world. And this term is not limited to geography. You know, we can buy a globe, if you still have one of those in your house.

[ 20 : 35 ] And it's going to be obsolete by the time you get it home from the store. There are going to be some boundaries that will change. There'll be names that change of countries. But God is not speaking about geography here.

He is talking about the people groups of the world. that all need to have the opportunity to hear and to repent and to trust and follow Jesus.

So go make disciples of all nations. And then Jesus commanded for followers of his to be baptized. That we're to baptize those who come to follow Jesus.

We train disciples to publicly identify with our Lord. To say, I'm giving my life in following this one who gave his life to me.

In many places around our world, baptism is a very dangerous thing. I know of some places in India where I have friends that are working.

[ 21 : 43 ] And baptism is very public. They don't do it privately in a home or down by a quiet stream. No, they find a public place. And they want their neighbors and friends to know that they're identifying with Jesus.

Leaving behind all others and choosing Jesus only. And so it's that kind of declaration that gives witness to the work of God in our hearts.

But also the work of God in our world. So Jesus calls us, Go, make disciples, be baptized. And then, he tells us, teach them to think about his ways.

No, that wasn't the wording. Teach them to discuss his teachings. No, teach them to observe. And what does that mean?

To obey. Teach them to obey all that God's word is commanding us to do. I am a work in progress.

[ 22 : 52 ] I've been a follower of Jesus for a lot of years. But when I look at myself in comparison to my Lord, I know there's still so much work to be done in me.

And you would say the same. I'm so grateful for a patient God who's working in me and teaching me. And so, I teach others what I've been obeying.

And I'm trying to always keep raising the bar, as the term is. that always, I would remember, I'm not a perfect model of a follower of Jesus, but I know the perfect one.

And I want my life to be like his, to reflect him. So we teach them to be obedient and to walk alongside of us. That's why we are the church.

That's why we need each other. That's why we need gatherings like this. That we can encourage each other to keep going with the work we've been called to do. And at times, this task seems impossible.

[ 23 : 59 ] I wonder what the disciples felt on that day. They're with Jesus and then he's reminding them of these words and he ascends into heaven and all of a sudden the weight of what he's just said hits them.

And they're like, how can we possibly go to all nations and do this? But if we'll pause and reflect on the final words of Jesus, we'll know the how.

Amen? The how is, Jesus said, behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. If it had been something that was humanly possible, Jesus wouldn't have had to say that.

But no, he reminds them, my presence is with you because I'm in you and you are in me and without me you can't do anything of value.

Remember John 15? The vine and the fruit that's going to be produced, the vine has to, the branch has to stay connected to the vine.

[ 25 : 05 ] And so we're reminded Jesus is with us to the end of the age and we are called to do his work by his power for his glory.

So I have to ask this morning as we reflect on these three passages, God's purpose for the world to reflect and reveal his glory in every place, God's vision for the end of time that people from every language, tribe, and nation would stand before the throne worshipping him, and then God's commission commission or his call to action for all believers.

That's what God is doing in the world but how is God working those things through you and through me? Let me suggest some things that we can do.

If you really believe for the purposes of God's word that these words are true and that we are called to carry them out, here are three things that we need to continue to do.

As the people of God, we need to pray. We need to be about prayer and not just as a once-a-week event we're going to gather for prayer.

[ 26 : 21 ] That's powerful. That's meaningful. But it's an intentionality that all of life connects us with the one who has the power to do his work. What are some things Jesus told us to pray about?

Well, he said, pray to the Lord of the harvest that he would do what? Send forth laborers into the field. That's from Matthew 9.

We know that we should pray for our lost friends and family members that don't know Christ. Our neighbors, our co-workers. And I had a friend many years ago that taught me, before you talk to your friends about Jesus, you need to talk to Jesus about your friends.

We need to lift them up and pray, God, help them to be convicted of their need for you. God, show them who you are. God, reveal to them that there's so much more to life than what they are experiencing.

And so, we pray for those around us. And then, we need to pray for those places that are hard to get to. And those people that have no Bible in their language.

[ 27 : 28 ] And so, prayer is something that we're called to do if we're going to be a part of carrying out this work of God. But secondly, I believe, as the people of God, we are to give.

We give so that Bible translations can be completed. We give so that the work of the local church is done in ministering to this community of Bells Hill.

But also, we give so that missionaries can go to other places that you and I physically cannot go. but we can invest in God's work in that way.

So, we pray, we give, but we must also go. Now, my friends and I who have come from Alabama, well, we feel like this is a part of the command that we're trying to do.

We wanted to go, go where God is leading so we can be a part of God's work. Where God is doing something, I want to be there. But you can also go across the street to your neighbor.

[ 28 : 35 ] And you can go down the hall to the next office where you're working and share with someone there. You can go across Glasgow and be a part of some other work.

You can go across your nation and across the world because we are called to join God in his work. The Great Commission is very clear and it is for all believers.

But in Acts 1-8, we see a sort of a rephrasing of that command to go. In Acts 1-8, we read, you will receive power.

After that, the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Well, for those first disciples hearing those words, Jerusalem was the place that they were presently. They weren't all from that region, but they were presently in that city and they could have impact there.

[ 29 : 45 ] But also, Judea would have been the next concentric circle around them that this is the bigger area. Here we're in Lanarkshire, right? So, you know, out of Bell's Hill into Lanarkshire and then to all of Scotland and then to the ends of the earth because this is the work of God and we are the people of God and we're called to join him in his work, to be empowered by his spirit, to bring about his purposes, that the glory of the Lord would be filling all of the earth.

Can I pray for you as we close this time? Father God, we are thankful that today not only can we know you and be a part of your family, but we can be a part of your work and we must be if we're going to be obedient to the call that you have placed on us.

God, we are overwhelmed by the task at times, but we know that you are not finished. You're not finished with your work in this world.

You're not finished with Bell's Hill Baptist Church. You're not finished with followers of Jesus all around the world. you're doing your work in us and through us so that one day before your throne there will be peoples from every language, tongue, and tribe and there'll be singing salvation belongs to the Lamb.

We worship you, God, because you're worthy and we thank you today that you'll empower us to continue the task walking alongside of you doing your work for your glory.

[ 31 : 46 ] We thank you, Jesus, for this great privilege and I pray today if there's anyone in this room who has yet to turn from their sin and trust in Christ as Savior, I pray that today might be the day they would join your family and your work.

It's in the powerful name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Thank you.