

Renewing Your Missional Passion

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 August 2022

Preacher: Randy Matthews

[0:00] I attempted to go to Shoreline Kids today, but I can just see my wife saying, hey, you've got to give the message. You can't go with them. Our granddaughter Brittany, Mike and Adeline, Mike and Brittany's daughter said to us, we told them there's a house near us. You could move there. We would love to have you close. Now we're over an hour away. And she said to her mother, I'd like to go there so that Mima, Marsha, my wife, can be in Shoreline Kids every day.

So, well, we want to be a part of everything that's going on here, but we only get to be here at certain times. So thank you for the welcome and also for the prayer. I love the series that you're in, Psalms. There was a man that asked me to be with him at the few weeks before he died. And he and he asked me a question that I don't think I'd been asked by anyone else. And the question was this, prepare me to die. And I said, wow, what a what a responsibility. Prepare me to die. And as I prayed over that question, what God kept bringing back to me was poetry like the Psalms. Poetry inspires us to new things. And so I love the series that you're in in Psalms. Today we're in Psalm 67. I would like to read it. And then we will begin. We'll begin. Psalm 67 to the choir master with stringed instruments, a psalm, a song. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy. For you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon the earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. The earth has yielded its increase. God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us. Let all the ends of the earth fear him. And so that is our prayer, Lord, that all people everywhere would know you and the wonder of who you are. Grant your blessing to us so that your salvation may spread here and beyond. Amen. I don't know if you've ever heard of the name Helen Rosevere. Has anyone ever heard of her? Helen Rosevere, a wonderful woman of God, lived from 1926 to 2016 when she died, I believe, at the age of 91. Helen Rosevere served as a missionary in Belgian Congo called Zaire back in Congo called Zaire back in her day. Today it's called the Democratic Republic of Congo. Right when I got here today, I got a text saying that people, many in the Democratic Republic of Congo are calling for our ministry. We have a dear brother named Henry and he is serving and lives in Zambia. He's African and he is trying to find a way to get to all the demands in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Well, this is where Helen Rosevere served for many years. During the Civil War in 1964, she was captured, kidnapped, and held by rebel soldiers. She was held captive for five months where she was beaten and abused. But after her release, she spent two years in the U.S. and then went right back to Zaire and served seven more years despite all the suffering she had faced herself. When she came back finally in her old age, she decided that it was her calling at the end of her life to help other people. She didn't use those words, but that was the calling on her life. So she started working with the young people, many college students, and she was trying to urge them to join in a missionary movement to the nations. She would show up at college meetings and talk about the need around the needs in Zaire. The needs in other parts of Africa or Asia. And as she would lift up those needs, she would give this call. Who will go? Who will answer the call? And there were many young people who all said, I'll go. I will help meet that need. And so there was a great missionary movement.

[6:04] But something happened that discouraged her. And here's what happened. Whenever she gave that call based on the needs in the nations and asked people to meet those needs, she said, I gave people the wrong focus for missions.

What subtly happened in the lives of these young people is they began to see here's a need. I can meet it.

But when they got on the mission field, they found that people didn't like them just like they didn't like Helen and they beat her. They didn't want what they had to offer. And so here is what they found during that missionary movement. Almost all the vast majority of these young people all left the mission field in one year.

None of them stayed. And Helen Rosevear went back and said, God, what is going on? Why, when we raise up new, a new movement among the next generation, why is it they quit so, so quickly? And here was what she said.

The answer should be. She said, it is not about what you do or I do or even the great need. But if we would simply fall in love with Jesus again, we would all be missionaries. She said the answer to the missionary problem is not a need and what you can do about it. But the great need is to love Jesus more.

[7:52] In other words, to receive his love and to give out his love is the only motive for mission. Now, when we keep that in mind and we hear the heart of this great woman of God, we need to be asking ourselves, how might I love Jesus more? How might I receive more of his love and love him more?

Well, with that backdrop about mission, I'd like us to look into Psalm 67. Because Psalm 67 gives us three focus, three ways to focus our attention on Jesus, to call on him and to love him more.

I want to love Jesus more, not just be about more activity. I want the very heart of my very being love for him. And so notice what God does in the first focus that we have if we're going to renew our passion. We're going to be a people who will go where we never thought we would go and minister in ways we never thought we would. Let me just share with you a quick report. Pat on the left is a dear brother. We've been close for 22 years and now he is traveling with me all over the world. God has used this man who grew up, if you will, in Christ and had a business of his own and then served in a couple of churches. And now he is out going and training leaders like Joshua on the right. You've seen Joshua before. He's a key leader in Nigeria. But what I show you here is Joshua ministering to people one-on-one.

The love of Christ flowing through him as he works with a lady there who is a key leader in Jolingo, Nigeria. Another young Timothy that we have is Peter. And here Peter is sharing with some people during one of our breaks. When these people should be off getting coffee or tea and taking a time off, they're there with Peter as he is explaining God's plan for his church. These are showing a focus that renews a missional passion. And that focus is found in Psalm 67 verses 1 and 2.

If we're going to renew our love for Christ and our missional passion, we have got to have a prayer focus. That's why this Psalm begins, may God bless us. Now, if you're ever going to pray that prayer, it has an assumption behind it. And the assumption is God wants to bless you. How many of you believe God wants to bless us? All right, three of us. We're going to really believe that when I ask God, bless us, that He really wants to do it. I loved all the songs that Kyle and Megan did today and leading us in worship. But that one that was based in Numbers 6, 24 and following is a beautiful reminder of the blessing of God in the Old Testament. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

[11:57] May He make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. I love this prayer. And it is the basis of Psalm 67. May God bless us.

You know, Paul would pick up this idea of God's blessing in the New Testament. In Romans 8, 31 to 32, He said, if God is for us, who can be against us? 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? God wants to give us everything we need to fulfill His mission and to live out the abundant life. Jesus would say, just simply ask.

That's what He said in Matthew 7. Ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. When Jesus wanted to illustrate that truth, He started looking at fathers. And He says, if you're a father and you want to bless your children, you're not going to give them the opposite of what they asked for. And if you are evil and that's the way you treat your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him? I believe this Psalm starts with a prayer focus, admitting our need. Lord, if you don't bless me, my life will fall apart in a moment. But what I love most about this prayer focus is simply its purpose, why we pray

it. Not so our life will just be more comfortable so that I can live a life of ease.

When others in Nigeria are dying for the faith, that isn't why I ask God to bless. I ask God to bring His blessing so that somehow in that blessing, I will participate in seeing the gospel spread.

That is why it says in Psalm 67 too, the reason I want you to bless us, bless us as a church, bless us as a family. Why do I want that? That your way may be known and your saving power among all nations. Now I've highlighted here saving power. Here's what the NIV says, that your way may be known on the earth and your salvation known among all nations. What is the saving power of God or the salvation of God that He desperately wants to reach all people?

[15:06] You know what it is. It's the Hebrew word Yeshua. This is almost like a prophetic word. God is using Yeshua, the name we translate Jesus, as that saving power. Before Jesus had ever come to earth, born of the earth, born of the Virgin Mary, here is a word using His name. That name Yeshua means deliverance and victory. It is salvation in its truest sense. And truly in the New Testament, Yeshua is our deliverance. Hebrews 2. Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took of the same things. That through death, He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver. And deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Yeshua, Yeshua, our deliverance. And even in the Old Testament, God is crying out that the name of Yeshua, Jesus, the deliverer, may be known. Jesus is our deliverance, and He is our victor. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul said, the sting of death is sin, the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So in this prophetic word, I want you to take up to the Lord Jesus Christ. I need your blessing, Lord. May God bless us. But when you pray it, let it be with others in mind. Not to just sit back, enjoy, and hold on to the blessings in this way, but that all nations. The key word nations.

This word is used even in the New Testament. Matthew 28, 19, make disciples of all nations. Now the particular Greek word for nations used throughout the scripture here is the Greek word, where we get people group or ethnic group. What God is wanting is that every people group in every nation, even our own, would know the saving power of Jesus. Here's an example.

I have been to Nigeria countless times. Nigeria is one country, but it has 537 nations, ethnic groups, people groups living within it. So while the gospel has come to Nigeria, it has not come to all people groups. And it is God's desire from Genesis to Revelation that someone from every people group would be a part of his family. So what God is calling us...

... Is this one on? Very good. All right. If we're going to reach all people groups, let's take a quick lesson in a few of the terms that we need to understand. An unengaged people group measures the presence within that group. And when we call a group unreached, we are calling them a people with no workers, no presence. When you study the world, there are unreached people groups.

[19:47] Unengaged is another term, and it measures exposure. How available is the gospel to a people group, to an ethnic? An unreached people group is another term, and that measures response.

To what degree has the gospel taken root? If it is less than 2% of the people, they are called unreached.

But what we're after is a subcategory of the unreached, and that's frontier people. Frontier refers to unreached peoples with the least response to the gospel, less than 0.1%. Less than 0.1%. Less than 0.1% of their population have the name Christian at all, even if they don't know the Lord. And there's no church movement. No churches being planted.

The frontier people groups are who we're after. And so I just want to take this opportunity to say, while we pray, God bless us, may it be so that the frontier people groups may come to know it. Now, we can't all go to these frontier groups, but you have sent me. And God is opening incredible doors. I don't have time to give you a full report, but I have a full sheet in the back. I'd ask that you please take one.

[21:34] It's got a report, and then on the other side, my next two trips, where we're going to eight different African countries. I will be in eight different African countries from August 20th until October 2nd.

Now, I can't go and make any difference among the frontier peoples unless we pray. And so I'm asking that you join and say, God bless us. Bless this effort.

May the frontier peoples come to know you. The frontier peoples are represented in the red. And if you look here in...

Is this pointer work? I don't know if it does. Or am I doing the wrong one? Here it is. Look right here in Africa. Right on the baseline of the 1040 window.

I will be in these next few months right in this area here. Right where the concentration of many frontier peoples.

[22:47] But as you look across this, you see that every red dot, even some here near the northeast in our own country, only a few in South America, all of these red dots represent a group of people who are Muslim.

They don't know Jesus as Lord and Savior because they're blinded by a religion. Over here in India, you've got the blue.

And this is the most difficult mission field in the world. Right there. Hinduism. With millions of gods. What God has called us to pray is to increase our love by Jesus by asking for His blessing.

But then that the entire world, every people group, would know Him. Now this, I can't get this to go. Alright. I'm not Mr. Tech. Let me see. Okay. Okay. Okay. Next slide. Next slide. Next slide.

[24:01] If we are going to reach all of the people groups and our love for Jesus expands in our own hearts, it will be because of our prayer focus.

And the second thing that we find in this psalm is a praise focus. We renew our love for Jesus the more we praise Him.

God has a passion for His own glory.

God has a passion for His glory. And He wants all people to praise Him. Now that may sound strange as if God is an insecure person looking for someone to build Him up.

As a matter of fact, C.S. Lewis struggled with this. Let's look at this next slide. C.S. Lewis struggled with the command that God gave for all people to praise Him.

[25:15] And here's what he wrote in his reflection on the Psalms. He said, Now do you see where he's headed?

If we enjoy God, we praise Him. Notice C.S. Lewis, he says that this spontaneity not only flows over, but it's so natural.

It's all in the world. He said the world rings with praise. Lovers praise their mistresses. Readers their favorite poet. Walkers praise the countryside.

Players praise their favorite game. He said praise is everywhere in the world. Praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles.

Even sometimes politicians or scholars. He hadn't been to America. Praise rings in the natural world.

[26:51] He goes on to say, I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment.

It is. It's appointed consummation. Let me tell you what I'm talking about. During this short break that I've had between trips, Marcia and I got to go into New York and see a very marvelous Broadway musical.

And I recommend it to you, but it's going off in October. So if you want to see it, you need to go. And yes, they're paying me a commission to say this. No, I'm only kidding. They're actually not.

But it's called Come From Away. I don't know if you've ever heard of it. But in 9-11, when all the planes were grounded, this picks up the story of thousands of people who were grounded in Newfoundland.

What happened to the people who live in Newfoundland? What happened to the people who were grounded? And scripture is even quoted in this Broadway show.

[28:05] It's a wonderful thing. But I want to tell you why I wanted to tell you that today. Because when I tell you how wonderful it is, it increases the enjoyment that I had when I first saw it.

You see, what God wants us to do is to praise Him because we enjoy Him. Look at the next thing. C.S. Lewis looked at people and said, let's notice something about those who praise.

He says, I had not noticed how the humblest and at the same time most balanced and capacious. I'm glad he used that word. Makes us feel smart. He said capacious. That means having a lot of space inside. In other words, I called it broad-minded.

You got a lot of space. So C.S. Lewis said, I had not noticed how the humblest and at the same time most balanced, capacious or broad-minded minds praise the most, while the cranks, misfits, malcontents praise the least.

[29:26] He said, except where intolerably adverse circumstances interfere, praise almost seems to be inner health made audible.

That's a fascinating thing. That those who praise, and he's not even necessarily talking about praising God.

He's just talking about positive people who have something good to say. They praise. And if we add the supernatural dimension of praising God, we've got what God created us in the natural and also the supernatural.

C.S. Lewis said that the people who praise spontaneously urge us to join them. And that is what this psalm is saying.

As we grow in praise and our love quotient for Jesus grows, we will spontaneously ask people, would you come and see who he is?

[30:33] You see, the more we love Jesus through praise, the more we become spontaneous missionaries. And so in Psalm 67, it's almost as if the psalmist is saying, I want all people to praise because I enjoy God so much that I can't stand it if they don't know him too.

If we're going to renew a missional passion that God wants all of us to have, let it be a walk of praise.

Praise God with every step. Next slide, please. When God wants people from every people group to praise him, we need to understand what that looks like in our world.

If we were to look at a thousand people and look at the unreached or frontier people groups, we would find only one among a thousand who identify with Jesus.

In other words, the great vast need combined with our love for Jesus will help us reach the 999 of the most unreached of the unreached.

[32:13] Here's another way to look at it. Next slide. One in four individuals live in a people group where there is virtually no opportunity to hear about Jesus.

Notice what this translates into. If we look at North and Central America and add to it, South America. And add to it, Western Europe.

And add to it, North Africa in the Middle East. And Australia in Oceania. Next. All of those combined are less than the number of frontier people groups.

May love for God that spontaneously asks for praise take us where people need Him most.

Next slide, please. There's a third and last focus for renewing our spiritual passion and renewing our love for Jesus.

[33:27] And it is a promise focus. That is why this psalmist ends this psalm with the only future tense verb in the entire psalm.

God shall bless us. He will do it. It is an exclamation that God's promise to bless us.

Have His face shine upon us. He shall bless us. Period. And what the psalmist looks at is, especially in the Old Testament, in an agrarian culture, look, the earth has provided a crop.

And I will use that as a signal to say, God shall fulfill every promise given to us. This is what we say when we believe the promise of Matthew 6.33.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything you need will be added to you. He's not saying it will always be easy. But I will never leave you and I will never forsake you.

[34:43] I love how this psalmist ends with promise. And he makes a declaration with his own lips.

God will bless us. We need to rise up in the promises of God and tell Him, I move out able to forget about myself.

Jesus said, deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow it. How do I do that? When I know that God's going to take care of me, I can take my mind off myself and focus elsewhere.

God provides everything for us to do what He's called us to do. And His promises are to fuel our love for Jesus so that we now can focus the greatest need.

May God through His promise restore love for Jesus and our missional passion. We have a short, very short video that I want to show you.

[35:55] It's only two minutes. It's on our website, New Foundations International. It's the group I work with as we go to the world. I'd like you to see it and then I'll conclude.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[38:10] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Kyle, I don't know if you and Megan come up for the final song.

But as we conclude, there is a great need, but God isn't calling you in your power to do it.

He calls us to reflect and meditate on His love and then give it away in His name.

God wants to do something in all of us today. He wants to renew a missional passion through a renewal of His love.

[39:12] And so let us pray. Lord, we need you. When we say, bless us, make your face shine on us, we are ultimately saying that if you don't, our lives are chaos, broken.

We need you. And we want your blessing. All people in their right mind want your blessing. But we want it for a bigger purpose.

Not to make our lives more comfortable, but to fuel love for you that moves into mission. Lord, we've been looking at frontier people groups, but there are unreached people even in our midst.

Would you renew in us our mission here in New London and to the end of the world? Oh, Lord, we pray.

Bless us that the salvation in Jesus may be proclaimed. To every people.

[40:29] Lord, we're going to praise you and walk in praise. We pray that as we praise you, that that deep enjoyment, not the flitting enjoyment of comedy or something, but that deep satisfaction, deep in our soul, would be built and fueled by praise.

Oh, how we praise you for not treating us as our sins deserve. We praise you for giving your one and only Son.

We praise you for the security of knowing our home in heaven. And we praise you for the promised Holy Spirit who lives in us even now.

Praise be your name. And Lord, your promises never fail. You have never turned your back on anything you promise.

And so we hold out your promise now. We will seek you and your righteousness first. And we hold on to the secure promise that everything we need to follow you fully will be given everything.

[41:52] We trust you completely. And so our Lord, here in this place, renew our spiritual passion by renewing love for you.

More love to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.