

Global Missions

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[0 : 00] All right, team, shall we begin? Well, the subject of our inquiry this morning is Jesus as our model for mission.

! And the question before us is, how does Jesus serve as a model for imitation in our mission?

That is the mission upon which he himself sends us. That is the mission to declare the good news of God's saving action in Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.

Now, it may seem natural, maybe even obvious, that we would take Jesus as our model for mission. For much of his call upon us is expressed in, follow me.

Tread the path that I have marked out for you. And that we, his followers, would follow him seems a large part of what it simply means to be a Christian.

[0 : 58] But, if we were to ask, is there a clear statement that Jesus' mission is to be the model for us, I know of no better place to begin than Jesus' own statement in his high priestly prayer in John 17, where, addressing the Father and referring to his disciples, he prays, As you, Father, have sent me into the world, so I have sent them, disciples, into the world.

Verse 18. This very parallel formula Jesus reaffirmed to his disciples upon his resurrection when he appeared among them. Peace be with you.

It comes from the Latin, *missio*, I send. Now, we might legitimately ask, what is the comparison Jesus is making or directing us to observe?

See, whenever we make a comparison and say, this thing is like or is to be like another, we rightly ask, in what way?

What is the relevant point of comparison? So, when Isaiah tells us, all flesh is like grass, we ask, in what particular way?

[2 : 52] Is it that we flourish better, like grass, in summer than in winter? Or that we both enjoy a good shower regularly? You know, what does Isaiah have in mind? We need to press and try to discern what the point of comparison is.

So, when Jesus says, as the Father has sent me, so send I you, we legitimately ponder, in what way is it to be the same or similar?

Is the parallel simply in the fact of being sent and no more? The Father sent me, and I send you.

Well, besides this being somewhat trivial in observation, what might make us think Jesus is saying more?

Something thicker. Something deeper. That his parallel is more substantive than superficial.

Is the parallel simply the fact of being sent? Like someone might say, close the door as I close the door. Meaning, simply, close it. Without any bearing on the manner in which it's closed, as long as it just keeps the cat out.

[4 : 07] Or in. Or is it thicker and fuller? Imitate the manner in which I close it. First the latch. Then the key.

Then the deadbolt. Finally the chain. What might make us think Jesus is similarly saying more?

That contained in his statement is something deeper and richer.

Not merely that we have the commonality of being sent. But beyond that. Where the *as*. In *as* the Father sent me.

Means in the same manner in which I was sent by the Father. Reflecting those same contours I send you. Your sending should reflect the same or similar features as mine.

It should exhibit the same character. That we are on solid ground here with this further claim is suggested by the way Jesus explicitly grounds and applies this parallel.

[5 : 17] Consider how he often characterizes the relation between the Father, the sender, and himself, the sent one.

Jesus asserts explicitly a congruity and correspondence between the sender, the Father, and the Son, the sent one.

The Father pulses through the Son. The Son is never energized by anyone else. I can do nothing on my own. John 5.30 The works that the Father has given me to accomplish.

The very works that I am doing. Bear witness about me. That it is the Father who has sent me. John 5.36 That is, there is a characteristic sent of the Father upon all the Son's words and works.

Indeed, the Father has, quote, set his seal upon them. John 6.27 Thus, Jesus can assert, I have come in my Father's name.

[6 : 30] John 5.43 He, the Son, represents or re-presents. He makes it as if the Father is present.

He acts and speaks for the Father by acting and speaking as the Father would were he there. So it is that Jesus can say, If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.

And then conclude, since he was present and so presenting the Father, from now on you do know him and have seen him. John 14.7 Failing to grasp what Jesus was saying, Philip responds, Oh, well, just show us the Father and it is enough for us.

And Jesus responds, Have I been with you so long and still do you not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

[7 : 43] John 14.10 In other words, the words that I speak and the works that I do are the Father's works for, because, the Father indwells me.

This, then, is the thick, deep, intimate connection between the sending Father and the sent Son. Notice, it's more than imitation. It is unindwelling. And then, follows a stunning revelation that Jesus makes to his disciples.

So stunning that he prefaces it with his double truly. Truly, truly, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

And how does his going to the Father explain how we will do his works? As Jesus explains, I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper, even the Spirit who will dwell within you.

[8 : 58] So here is the parallel explicated and explained. The Father sends the Son. The Son reflects and re-presents the Father, because the Father indwells the Son.

But so it is with us, his disciples. Jesus sends us. And we can and do reflect and re-present Jesus, because his Spirit dwells in us.

As the Father to me, so I to you. As the Father sent me, so send I you.

Yes, Jesus is our model for mission. Yes, we strive to imitate Jesus. We walk after him missionally. The apostle uses that very word.

I imitate Christ, 1 Corinthians 11. But, and is this not thrilling? But, we have something more.

[10 : 09] Ours. Every disciple's is an indwelling of Christ by his Spirit, which energizes and affects this imitation, this re-presentation of Jesus.

The indwelling Spirit bends us to the model of Christ. The indwelling Spirit replicates that pattern.

The indwelling Spirit causes to spring up that fountain of the Christ life in us.

Does that make sense? Well, it's a critical foundation. Okay, now comes the, some even more exciting part, perhaps. I don't know. Some also exciting part.

So, what is the pattern to which we disciples are to conform? As the Father sent me, so I send you.

So, we naturally ask, how did the Father send the Son? Now, there are no doubt, multiple and marvelous answers to this question. But, I want us to focus our attention on the, perhaps, most fundamental and astonishing answer.

[11 : 29] And, surely, it is this. How did the Father send the Son? As a human being. As a human being.

He took on our flesh, John 1, and dwelt among us, like unto us. And, this is the rich vein that we want to mine.

That the Father sent the Son incarnationally. Incarnationally. We want to ask what it meant. What it involved for the Son.

And, what it might mean and involve for us in imitative pattern. So, here we go.

The incarnation of the Son meant first and foremost that one, he came himself personally.

[12:30] He didn't send an angelic embassy. He didn't dispatch a prophet who bore his message. He didn't convey to us a text, even inscribing it, perhaps, with his own divine finger on two tablets.

He came himself in person as Emmanuel, God with us. So, here's our question.

And, we can kick it around together a little bit here. What implications might this feature of the incarnation hold that he came himself personally for us in our missionary activity?

Could this aspect be part of the relevant model for us? that the shepherd himself goes out in search of the sheep?

So, non-rhetorical. So, let's kick this around. What could this mean for us? What if we were to take this as a parallel? Yes? So, one of the things that was fascinating to me about Jesus' conversations is that he knew where to take them.

[13:42] I mean, you know, he knew how to he knew the trajectory in people's lives. And, I don't know it. And, it takes so much listening and learning and getting to know someone before you maybe suspect.

Maybe this is where the consensus is. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, and in order, and insofar as to do that well, you wonder if that can be done remotely?

Probably not as effectively. So, maybe there's the significance in actually, you know, personally showing up among the people that we're trying to reach. I think that's, that's, that's, that's true.

Yeah, yeah. Anything else? Yeah? Yeah, I think it highlights the importance of, like, the particular and the personal relative to the universal.

Yeah. of their own role, but, like, Jesus didn't just show up everywhere to everyone and heal everyone immediately. Yeah, yeah. Because people in particular, it involves showing up in a particular place at a particular time.

[14:50] Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Richard? Richard? So, coming in person would, to me, at least suggest that, as Jesus came as a patrufer, so we must come as Christophers.

Uh-huh. A God carrier, we must go, a patrufer, a God carrier, he carries God to them, and we carry Christ to him, a Christopher.

Yes, yes. We can't do that unless we do it in person, is my point. Yeah, yeah, the personal nature.

Yeah. I think, yeah, I mean, does this model not encourage us to just, to go, to go out, to seek out?

I mean, it's interesting to contrast this with largely the Old Testament pattern. You remember how God says, look, I want you Israel, to obey my laws, and that's, then display a culture and a flourishing so enviable that the surrounding nations would be attracted, and to say, wow, they must have a pretty amazing God.

Let's serve him. Deuteronomy 4, 5 through 7 talks about this. There are many places. We might call it centripetal. That is, it draws from the outside toward the inner center.

[16:16] center, a centripetal model of missions, if you will. Is that what we have in the New Testament? Maybe something of that, but is there not a contrast here?

Where we're told, go, we're sent out, go into all the world. It's a centrifugal, not a centripetal, a centrifugal, out from the center, going out.

The pattern of the incarnation is to go out, to seek and to save the lost. We go to them. We don't expect them to come to us.

I mean, it would be nice if they do, and maybe some might. Queen of Sheba. But, are we a going out people here at Trinity? Are we a going out people?

such imitates the incarnation most fundamentally. Let me ask also, could this feature of the incarnation that the Son came himself in person also maybe have an implication of the necessity or at least the desirability of more than simply a proclamation of the message?

[17:32] It's never any less than a proclamation, but could it be involved something more than just proclamation thoughts? Yeah, I was thinking Jesus came embodying the Father.

We come embodying Christ, whether we memorize a certain way of presenting the gospel glory. It's not solely in those words or in the out of traffic programs or whatever.

It's who we are. Yes. It requires more of us. Yeah, that's so helpful. So, we certainly want to declare the gospel, but then let's also display it perhaps enacted in our lives.

John Stott that says in order for the gospel to be credible, it must be visible as well as audible. Matt, yeah, yeah. Oh, sure.

Go ahead, Matt. Smith. Matt Smith. Matt Smith. So, little missionary story. Yeah, yeah, we like missionary stories. In the 1950s, people were being, missionaries were going to people along a

river, and the traditional way was, you know, canoe, and then they go in, you know, to the village and talk with them, and then some other missionaries came along and said, well, that's inefficient, so they got a bigger river boat.

[19 : 00] Yeah. So, they didn't have to, you know, camp out with the people. Yeah, yeah, yeah. But the people said, in reflecting on it, those people, they don't love us, they don't like us, you know, they stay up by themselves, coming to be with us.

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Did you answer something? Yeah, I think it has some interesting implications if we view our cast as, if everyone has heard the message, it seems that God is far more inefficient than we want him to be.

Oh, yeah, that's great. He accomplishes his purposes. And I think we need to be careful because we could swing too far and over-condemn mass communication, technology, 21st century, lots of, you know, I think we could condemn that.

Right, right, right. But I do think there's a gravitational center here. Yeah, yeah. That we need to keep thinking. God intended it to be personal.

Yeah, yeah. To be people, not just. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Go ahead. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[20 : 35] Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's certainly conspicuous. I mean, he ate with people, he enters into their homes, he attends their weddings, he touches lepers, he weeps at their graves, he cooks meals for people.

Yeah, yeah. So perhaps Christian mission should strive not merely to be proclamation, it's never less than that, but to strive to extend presence also along with that proclamation.

Yeah, please, please. I think for those going, as Jesus has dependence on the Father, in our weaknesses and imperfections, you know, imperfect loving, imperfect doing of things, we learn to depend on the Lord.

Yes, yes. As he depended on the Father. And then part of that expression to those that we are serving is there will be suffering involved.

And that's part of the humanity of going where I think for those that go, when people see them have problems and suffering, it speaks to them.

[21 : 56] Yes, yes, yes, yes. Well, I'm going to come to that in just a moment because I think that that's something very central implication. That's right. so, the incarnation of the son also meant that he came to as a human person, a human person.

That is, he took on all the concrete particularities of those that he sought to reach. He became like us in all that our humanity entailed, apart from sin.

Technically, humanity doesn't entail sin. It can be genuinely human. But he took on all the particularities, all that our humanity entailed.

This meant, for one, that he took on a body and a soul. And with it, just as we've been reminded, he, with it, all of its vulnerabilities in a fallen world.

to be with us was to be with us in our griefs, afflictions, sorrows, and sighs. He bore them with us.

[23 : 12] Surely, he has borne our griefs. He bore them with us, even before he bore them for us. Like us, he was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.

He was like us, hungry and thirsty, wounded and weary. He knew what it is to weep and to bleed. He knew betrayal, mockery, and abandonment. It's amidst the horrors of Buchenwald, the Nazi extermination camp, some Jewish prisoners decided to put God on trial for neglecting his people. Witnesses were produced for both the prosecution and the defense, different rabbis that were there. But they found the case for the prosecution was overwhelming and they found God guilty of abandonment of them and condemned him.

But the incarnation was in our suffering. But he came into the worst of it.

It is here that Edward Shilito, shattered by the carnage of the First World War, was able to find deep comfort. He wrote a poem entitled Jesus of the Scars, which ends like this.

[24 : 43] The other gods were strong, but thou wast weak. They rode, but thou didst stumble to a throne. But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak.

And not a god has wounds, but thou alone. So how might this be a model for us in our missions? What might this look like for us at Trinity? And what might happen if we forget or neglect this feature of incarnational missions?

Thoughts? It seems like if we don't pursue this, it means really our identity is true beings that we no longer represent God.

no longer living in this world, this universe with true humanity that we abandon the issue of self-sacrifice and motivated because of his sacrifice, but if we didn't deny that, we're not really thinking that we were called to lie and we have not wanted to that.

[26 : 08] so it seems like there's something about truth that God is trying to bring for life in Jesus. to Jesus.

Yeah. Yeah. I think if we do not, there's some words like adapting culturally.

It reminds me of Paul from the Southern Corinthians. I became all thanks to all people and I might live some. It's an advertisement for next week where we'll talk about Paul as the missionary model. Fantastic. Thank you. To be continued. Go ahead. But when we are incarnate into communities or groups of people, we eat and drink like them.

We try to be part of their community as well. Yeah. But in certain cases where Christianity is, there's a certain culture that's like enforced or pressed upon the people and it becomes just...

[27 : 09] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's dominant. Sure. As Westerners, I think we can appear to come with everything.

Like from the eyes of those that we may go to serve, we may seem like Ubermensch. Yeah. Right. Right. But we have finances and they don't always maybe understand like people come and have this if you're not working there.

And if you appear like you don't have sickness and you're fine financially and physically, it feels like somebody that they cannot touch.

Right. Right. They can't reach. Yeah. There certainly has been a history oftentimes of missionaries and I'm sure the issues were very complicated and challenging.

but to go and to have a missionary compound and walled so you were immured against a lot of the dangers and threats and very vulnerabilities that the people outside are exposed to that you are actually seeking to reach and your unwillingness to make yourself vulnerable in the same ways that they are, I think you're right.

[28 : 35] It can become a real barrier and maybe even a stumbling block to those. Yeah. And then there was, of course, a reaction to that.

It's not as if all missionaries. The Lottie Moon Fund that we have, her story is remarkable. You know, there was a woman who the Chinese knew she loved them so much that she would give anything for them.

And when she finally came home, she pretty much died of hunger on the way home and when, because there was famine in China at the time and when they opened up her steamer trunk, they found it completely empty.

She had given everything away. Everything. She had not kept herself from any of the vulnerabilities that those who she was seeking to reach were exposed to.

Yeah. Well, that the Son came as a human person and became like us in all our humanity entailed also meant that he took on a human culture.

[29 : 57] Jesus communicated his message in a particular language, for example, Aramaic. He used the local vernacular, translating the divine words into the cultural forms of first century Palestine.

He took up their questions and inflected his message through their cultural consciousness and their categories, their traditions, their figures of speech.

The incarnation shows us the astonishing truth that the divine person and message can be expressed in human form.

that human cultures actually have a carrying capacity. They are capable of bearing the divine. Just as Mary, the mother of our Lord, is called Theotokos, the bearer of God, as Richard has reminded us, so also human culture can be the bearer of the divine word.

[31 : 05] God can speak his divine words in Aramaic with a Nazarene accent, I suppose. And indeed, any and every culture can be the bearer of the divine word, a Logotokos, or a bearer of the word, a carrier, Logokristos.

This is what the great missiologist Andrew Walls, probably the greatest missiologist of the 20th century. I think he just died quite recently.

What he has called the indigenizing principle. The indigenizing principle. That is to say that the gospel can make its home in any and every culture.

Now, later we're going to talk about it's never completely at home in any culture. There's also a pilgrimizing principle that's going to call us to another place, but it can, nonetheless, make its home in any and every culture.

The indigenizing principle. And that the gospel, indeed, seeks embodiment within every culture. And this recognition of the implication of the incarnation, has made for Christian readiness to translate the scriptures into every language.

[32 : 35] That's just the first impulse, and it's a good, right impulse for Christians. And this in contrast to Islam's view of the exclusivity of Arabic as the sacramental language of Muslims.

Kenneth Craig talks a lot about this. And this is one of the emphases of the late Yale missiologist, Laman Sané, grew up as a Muslim, who argues that Islam is structurally tied to Arabic revelation, whereas Christianity is structurally committed to translation because of the incarnation.

Andrew Walsh writes, incarnation is translation. When God and Christ became man, divinity was translated into humanity as though humanity were the receptor language.

See how natural that it is for us to seek to translate the scriptures? So, what might be some implications for this, of this, for how we do missions?

How might it make us, let's think of this for a little bit, how might it make us think of the receptor cultures we seek to reach with the gospel?

[34 : 13] Any thoughts? If they have a caring capacity for the gospel, how might it make us think about these receptor cultures and regard them?

Yeah. One interesting thing is it seems like there are in different cultures that even in our experience we don't give analogies within the culture that can carry the message in a way to the heart that you can't find intellectual or by individual.

Yes, yes, yes. that there are, that there are, within each culture there are these resonances that will be there.

It's as if somehow God allowed something to grow up in the culture that would be such a perfect receptor of the gospel that when the gospel comes in, the gospel illuminates this aspect, but also this aspect illuminates the gospel itself.

So we go in with the expectation of cultures that there are going to be some things in this culture that will illuminate the gospel in a way that we might not have seen before, almost certainly have not, because it's a very different culture.

[35 : 51] So since the gospel can be at home, make its home, sorry, never at home, but never completely at home, since it can make its home in every culture, what we want to do is we want to come in and seed the gospel into each culture in their vernacular, maybe translating the scriptures, translate the scriptures into the indigenous languages and see how the gospel then germinates and bears its native fruits in that particular soil.

And there will be expressions and embodiments of the gospel that springing up from that particular cultural soil will be new to the missionary.

There will be fresh discoveries of the applications of the gospel. And this should give us a real openness to discovery.

And think about this. It will take the whole people of God, drawn from every tongue, tribe, and nation, to discover, display, and delight in the whole glory of Christ in his gospel.

It will take the whole people of God to discover, display, and delight in the whole glory of Christ. So we come in seeking to plant the seeds, but so eager to see what color is the flower going to come up out of this soil?

[37 : 21] What will it be like? Andrew Walls. I mean, this keeps us from being too paternalistic about these things.

Andrew Walls has a wonderful image. He says, imagine a great concert hall. And we all, as Christians, we all have our seats from all these different cultures, and we're watching the same drama, and that's the gospel.

But some of us, depending upon where you're seated, you're going to have a slightly different view. Someone might be right up close to the orchestra pit, so they pick up right away that little light pizzicato, indicating that the villain is making an appearance soon, and they notice.

Maybe, maybe you have a seat way up in the nosebleed seats, but you kind of have a nice, broad, bird's-eye view of the whole thing.

Maybe you're sitting through your night, so you see, just from your view, the dagger of the assassin before anyone else, and you're attentive to that. You get the picture.

[38 : 30] And everybody has a slightly different take on this thing, and then when the intermission comes, you all get there, and over your tee, you're talking about how exciting it was. Did you, oh no, I missed that.

I hadn't seen that. That's fantastic. Oh, I see how that fits together with this. I mean, what a wonderful, wonderful collective experience to see how the gospel shimmers and shines and is radiant from all these different angles.

So it's a great image. So one other question. What happens in our mission when we forget that particular implication?

What can happen? Yeah, my back. Well, it's great to me, just picking up on that, that this dynamic makes, hopefully, makes us more self-reflective and aware that our own, the thing that we've grown up in, and this is such a danger for Western culture, Christendom is to think, well, we, our Christianity is acultural.

Exactly. Acultural, not cultural. Yeah, it doesn't reflect, excellent. Yes, yes, yes. It's universal. Yeah. Rather than saying, no, this is a Western expression of this, and we need to continue to have the humility to reflect on our own culture and where we're culturally captive, where we shouldn't be.

[39 : 51] Yeah. And, as you were saying, then learn, because, yeah, and then learn from others and just grow in our richness of understanding by having that humility.

And there are lots of tricky things in the youth of that. Yeah. No, I think that's key. It's really important. Yeah. It's interesting that, so the Puritan, the early Puritan missions in New England thought that, you know, just illustrating how, you know, if we think that our culture is not a culture, it's just normative, and we prefer our culture, perhaps even impose it, our cultural forms on those we seek to reach, really that's just kind of cultural imperialism.

And the Puritans, and I love the Puritans, the early Puritans in New England where they were trying to reach the natives, they expressed again and again the need to, I'll use their term, to civilize the natives before they gospelize.

That's also their term, gospelize the natives. They said, we gotta get them, first, before we can give them the gospel, we gotta get them to, you know, to wear the right clothing and to settle down, not be nomadic, settle down in a proper way in villages with picket fences.

You know, we can't do this church thing off the back of a horse. It just doesn't work. We gotta civilize them before we can gospelize them. And they really believe that.

[41 : 25] I mean, we kind of laugh, but they really believe this. This shaped the missionary enterprise until David Brainerd goes down, and he's at the Forks of the Delaware and cross Wixong, and he's preaching to these as yet uncivilized Native Americans.

And, I mean, the description's fantastic, but it's just like a Pentecost. You know, and he hears this mighty rushing wind, and they're starting to rejoice in the Lord, and they're soundly converted.

And they are still savages, as they're described as. But they are obviously regenerated. And this just completely shook the categories of the Puritans.

And they finally, and kudos on them, they shifted. They said, oh my goodness, we never realized. We don't need to civilize the Natives before we gospelize them.

God can make Christians of them without making fine Englishmen of them. And maybe some of the clues in this would have been from Acts 15 and the Jerusalem Council, where do the Gentiles need to become Jews first before they can become Christians?

[42 : 51] They need to become culturally Jewish? And the answer that they concluded was, no, no. So this is so important. Well, finally, and it's just going to be finally for us this morning, for we're far from exhausting this topic of the implications of the incarnation.

But finally for us, the incarnation of the Son meant an emptying that was costly. An emptying that was costly.

As Paul writes to the Philippians, though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped or hung onto, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of humanity.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. Or as Paul expresses the incarnation to the Corinthians, though he was rich, yet for your sakes, he became poor so that you, by his poverty, might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8 and 9. When Jesus, on the eve of his death, wrapped himself in a servant's towel and washed his disciples' feet, that stunning act of self-abasement was no isolated gesture, but emblematic of his whole incarnate life.

[44 : 22] I have come not to be served, he explained, but to serve and to give my life. Mark 10.45. When the Father sent the Son, he gave him a cup.

Contained in that cup was a life of pouring himself out in sacrificial service, even unto death.

Regarding his mission, he said, shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?

John 18.11. And as the Father sent me, so I send you. Jesus gives a cup to each disciple.

As Jesus solemnly asked the sons of Zebedee, are you able to drink the cup? They rather naively responded with breezy confidence, oh, we're able.

Matthew 20.22. But the cup we are each given is one of taking up a cross and dying daily in our mission.

[45 : 24] It involves, as with the master whom we follow, a costly, self-emptying sacrifice. Unless a grain of wheat fall to the ground and die, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever seeks to preserve her life shall lose it, but whoever gives up her life shall gain it. Well, the sons of Zebedee did drink the cup that Jesus gave them.

James, it seems, was the first martyr of the apostles. He was beheaded by Herod Agrippa as related in Acts 12. For his brother John, the cup was different.

His was a suffering of a long endurance. He was the only one of the 12 to die naturally after a lifetime of costly faithfulness.

We are each sent out in mission with a cup to drink given to us by Christ. And his own self-emptying incarnate life gives us some indication of the nature of that cup.

[46 : 40] So, finally, our question, what might be some of the implications of this feature of the incarnation for our thinking about and living out our mission?

Any thoughts? I've just been reflecting really for all of these aspects. Yeah, yeah. It has to come out of love because you can't, like, you can't, like, look for those touch points in the culture that you despise.

Yeah. You can't seek to, you know, enter into it if you hate it. Yeah, yeah. It's so inventive. But you have to love these people. And that's true for, I mean, suffering and giving stuff up.

If you don't do that, unless there's love. Yeah, yeah. I think that's so key. And this is what kind of goes back to that first foundation where if we're just called to imitate, here, be like Christ in these ways, who could do it but for the fact of the indwelling spirit who, and we're going to see this a little bit maybe next week, causes to, you know, so death works in me but life in you.

Paul is able to pour himself out for the benefit of the spiritual life of those he's seeking because the spirit wells up the life of Christ in us, the character of Christ in us.

[48 : 08] Supreme part of which is love, is self-giving love. Yeah. I mean, it's, yeah, yeah, and only for love's sake are you willing to take on these hard things.

And, you know, the history of missions, I mean, I wish I had another hour to illustrate this. You think of the Moravians that are trying desperately to get to the slaves, to reach the slaves in the Caribbean and they found no way.

so they sold themselves into slavery so they could be beside the slaves they were seeking to reach. Or other Moravian missionaries that would go into leper colonies two by two, every year they would go in to preach the good news there knowing that they would never come out.

They'd just be replaced every two, every year by the next two and the next two. And it went on for about a century. Yeah, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's remarkable.

Yeah. Yeah. Any other observations or implications for us?

[49 : 28] Thoughts? Yeah, yeah, Matt. An application for me is this. I felt about six months ago God saying to me, Matt, evangelize your neighborhood and various things have happened since then.

Uh-huh. But just today, I think an application is, Matt, when you take the dog for a walk, instead of listening to a book, which, you know, isolates you from interaction with people as you go through the neighborhood, uh, you know, pray for them and, uh, be ready to make the most of every opportunity, uh, you have to pray for and interact with the community.

That's excellent. I mean, that's incarnational. Wanting to put yourself in terms of a presence in their space that's shared rather than isolate yourself. That's fantastic, Matt. I, I, I did the, I decided to do

the same thing in the gym where just not use this because I want to be attentive to God's providences and just see what sort of conversations can come up and, and, and this is, usually communicates, don't bother me, I'm doing something.

Uh, yeah. I mean, there'd be so much more so I just, I just commend to you the incarnation as, as, as a model. You know, there, there's a, it seems also to shape the tone of our mission.

He came in humility as we've said. So how could we be arrogant and triumphalistic? It's excluded. You know, when he, he, he comes, he, he heals bodies.

[51 : 08] He feeds the hungry. So this seems like the whole person matters. The mission is hopeful for us because of the incarnation. we know God has not abandoned this world.

It's not simply rescuing souls from a doomed material reality. Rather, participating in God's renewal of all things. It's holistic. I mean, there's so many aspects that are, that are, um, bound up in the incarnation.

Well, let's, uh, conclude then with, uh, this remark by John Stott where he writes, all authentic mission is incarnational mission.

All authentic mission is incarnational mission. Uh, well, let's conclude there. And, uh, next week, Lord willing, we will, uh, take up a little companion study looking at the apostle Paul as a model for our missions and missionary activity.

So, uh, thank you and hopefully see you next week. Thank you. Thank you.

[52 : 44]