

# Missions Conference

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Date: 11 September 2022

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Sam that he shares that with us. Thank you, Pastor Trent. Open your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Corinthians chapter 3. I love missions conference. You say it's just because you're a missionary. No, it's not. I loved missions conference before I was a missionary. I've always loved missions conference. Missions conference is usually about focusing in on the missionaries and their fields, which is probably the normal thing to do. And we've heard some amazing missionaries this week. I hope you've been able to be here for all the services or most of the services, the Thursday night and Friday night, and then yesterday doing the staple-y thing. And then today, it's been amazing. The reports from our missionaries that we already support have been great. And we've met so many new folks. The Zuniegas going to Romania, the Clowers on their way to Mozambique, the McElwreaths planting the church down in Atlanta, and Brother Wicks doing the medical missions thing. And I guess then this evening, Brother

Gorham going to the deaf. Wonderful people. Everyone I hear, I'm like, oh, we've got to support those guys. They're great. And you want to support them. You really don't want to support them. Really, you're like, I just want to go help them. I just want to go be a part of what they're doing. It's really exciting. And I love to, I'm thrilled to be a part of it.

But as I said, usually in missions conference, we're looking, we're lifting up our eyes and we're looking overseas. We're seeing the missionaries. We're seeing their fields. But do you ever notice when you go to take a picture sometimes with your phone and you accidentally hit a button and instead of showing what's out there, it shows back here, which is always distressing to me.

That's what I want to do for a few minutes here. We've been focusing on the missionaries and on the mission field and that's good. But I want us to stop and look back this way because the theme, which I think is behind me, it says the church together. Because missions isn't just about out there. It is about that out there, but it's about back here too. And we need to think about the church as well. So I want to kind of hit front camera and look at us. And in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, it says, starting in verse 5, it says, who then is Paul and who is Apollos but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I've planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one. And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor, for we are laborers together with God. Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God, which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another man buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

[ 3 : 0 4 ] In this passage of scripture, the problem was, is that the Corinthians were all taking sides and saying, oh, I like Paul better. I like Apollos better. And Paul's like, stop, stop. You know, sometimes in, in missions conferences, we, we like to, you know, we like to lift up and exalt the missionaries. Oh, the missionaries are so wonderful. And, and I'll just tell you from a missionary perspective, when I go into a church and, and the pastor's up there, the missionaries are superheroes.

I'm like, oh, please no. Missionaries that I know are not comfortable because we're not. Okay. If you, if you wonder whether or not I'm a superhero, ask my wife, she'll tell you, not a superhero.

What? And I think vision would know this better than most churches because we have so much experience with missionaries that we find out, oh, they're just people like the rest of us. Yeah, exactly right.

People who have been called to do a very special job, but no different than anybody else. And the church plays an incredibly important role in that. There are several things from this passage of scripture I want us to look at. First of all, I want to look at the identity because whether you, whether God's put you in the place of being somebody like those we've just heard about who are going overseas to preach the gospel or whether God's put you here in, in Forsyth County, in Alpharetta coming to live here and be a part of the, the vision Baptist church family, whether you're a, a there person or a here person, either way, look what God says. Verse five, he says, he says, who then are these guys, but ministers. And the word ministers here is talking about people who are servants. Well, it's, it's not the idea there. There are ministers. No, no, no, no, no. It means they're servants. Who are, who are we?

We're servants. The missionaries going overseas are servants. Those of us who remain here were servants. Okay. What else does it say? Verse seven is a little less complimentary than certain.

[ 5 : 07 ] You think servants was kind of like put, no, you know, it gets worse. Okay. Verse seven. So then neither is he that planted anything, neither he that watereth. Okay. So we're, okay. We went from servants to nothing. Okay. And, and then I, I, what I love is verse eight. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one. Stop and think about that for a minute. The, and the yoke fellows ministry is such a good way of talking about that because the family, the Mises in Nepal and the Coopers here were one. We're all, we're all together. All these missionaries on the wall and all of us sitting in the, in the chairs, we're one together. It's not a competition. Neither side is higher than the other.

We are part of one team trying to achieve a goal together of serving God. Secondly, I want to talk about the role that we have to play. Whether we're on the wall or overseas or whether we're, we're here in Atlanta, we have an important role to play. And it talks about in this, that in this scripture, verse, verse six, Paul said, I have planted, Apollos watered. Paul played one role, the planting. Apollos played another role, the watering. It's kind of important to say, but God gave the increase. Okay. Verse 10, he talks about this. According to the grace of God, which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. Paul laid the foundation. Others were building the building on top of that foundation. And so there were different roles in the work and, and missionaries over there and us over here, we have roles to play. Now, the average church thinks that missions is about the missionary over there. That's all. But we know that's not true because we also have a very important role to play. Now, when we talk about the missionary over there, we, we, we talk a lot about their role, primarily their church planters.

You know, they're, they're going out sharing the gospel and discipling people and planting churches. That's, that's their, the primary role for those over there. But what is our role here? And that's the thing I'd like to take a minute to, to stop and think about. What is our role? Well, part of it is giving. Okay. And it's a missions conference. Yeah. They're going to talk about that.

There's a faith promise card in your seat back, you know, get it, fill it out, put a lot on it. Big number. Certainly that's a part of it. I honestly, I tell churches all over folks that is critically important, but that's the easy part. I mean, it really is. Everything else I'm going to talk about is harder. Okay. The, the giving is the easiest part of it, but we all ought to need to be a part of it. Can I say this to you? Two things about the giving, and I'm going to quit about giving because that's not really what I'm about today. Number one is every person here should be involved in giving. Every person here you say, Oh, well you mean, okay. So couples you can duke together.

Okay. But your kids should fill out a card. Okay. And if it says, I'm going to give a quarter a week, that's great. Okay. Everybody here should fill out a card. Okay. And secondly, this needs to have, if there's not faith involved, you're doing it wrong. Now there's nothing wrong with doing some accounting. There's nothing wrong with thinking, but if you're not asking God and looking at this with faith, then you're doing it wrong. So if we could get everybody and, and, and, and the, honestly, the issue isn't, we're going to try to squeeze every penny out of you that we can. The issue is let's every one of us get involved and every one of us seek God's face and in faith, do what he leads us to do. If we do that, we'll do it right. And, and, and the amount will take care of itself. That won't be a problem. Done with giving. Secondly, I told you it was going to get harder, right? Praying. Okay. I'm not even going to really take time on that this morning.

[ 9 : 09 ] We don't do as good as, I mean, we do, but we, we do pray, but we don't pray well enough and we don't pray enough. Okay. I don't. And we don't. That's something that needs to grow. Thirdly, sending our own to the field. Now I know of no church that does a better job of that than Vision Baptist Church of sending our own folks to the mission field. But folks, that needs to be something that not only was true, but continues to be true. That we see that as our mission is to raise up young people. I'm going to, during the next few minutes, as I try to race through the stuff I've prepared, I'm going to quote over and over and over Chase Southerd. Thursday night, Chase got up here and preached my message for me. In giving his testimony, he said in his testimony, almost everything I wanted to say tonight or this morning. And I love what he did. And stop and think about it.

Chase and Ashley came up through this church and now they're getting ready to go overseas. They are, those guys, now I'm just picking them as an example because we could look at many others just like them who've done the same thing. But thank God that we've got young people coming up from our, through our ministry who are going, going out to the field. Part of our role is giving, part of it is praying, part of it is sending our kids. Part of it, do you realize this, is preparing those young people for the ministry? Now you say, oh yeah, well I think that's Jeff's job. I think that's OGTC, our generation training center's job. Yes, no. Okay, yes, it is their job, but no, it's not exclusively their job. It's our job. Can I tell you something Lauren Grant said a minute ago? Everything I learned to do here I am doing in Peru. Isn't that what she just, I mean, I just wrote that down when she said that. See, that's exactly the point. Because our young people growing up here and all of these other young people that keep coming in here to learn, they're coming here to say, I need to know how to serve God. And how do they learn? Do they learn from the classes at OGTC? Yes. But you know what?

You know where they learn even more? They learn even more when they come into your Sunday school class and they're going to teach Sunday school alongside of you and you're like, okay, here's how we do it. And they watch how you prepare your lesson and they watch how you teach and they watch how you deal with the children. They watch how you take care of that troublemaker. They watch how you lead that person to Christ, how you love those kids, how you disciple them. Everything that you are doing serving God here, you are setting an example and you are teaching and training that next generation who are going to take those things all over the world. And what they learned from us who sit in the pews here, who serve Jesus here, is going to be spread around the world.

Okay. What we do here is of critical importance. Training them. Can I say this? Loving them. Discipling them. Chase said, I started coming to church. Robert started discipling me. People started loving me, inviting me to their homes, showing Christ's love. That's what vision does.

When my mom passed away, I knew that God would care for me. It's all because of this church teaching me the word of God. I realized how much the Lord and his people love me. He said, South African kids feel that nobody cares for them. The only difference between me and them is the local church.

[ 13 : 01 ] Your love for the children of vision and for these young people who come here to train, the love that you show them, the discipleship that you do, the practical ministry training that you're giving them is a critical part of training them to go overseas. Do you realize how critical your part is in training the missionaries that are going out around the world? And not only the training, but just the example. Again, we heard it from Lauren this morning. Chase said, God called us to South Africa so that we could replicate Vision Baptist Church. That's what they do. That's what we're about. And then, and so what do we do? Do we give? Yes. Do we pray? Yes. Do we send our own? Yes.

Are we loving and discipling and providing an example? Yes. Are we providing missionary care when they're on the field and when they come home? And I think we just saw the most beautiful illustration of that. I love the Yoke Fellows ministry. It's a wonderful ministry of the church.

And so when we look at the roles, we look here at 1 Corinthians, we see some, some planted, some watered. The guys overseas are doing the church planting and evangelism of people over there.

But we here have a vital, a necessary role in, in, in world missions through the giving and the praying and all of the preparation that we're pouring into the young people here.

And then where will all that lead? What's going to happen with that? We'll look at verse, verse six. I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Verse seven, he says the same thing. He says, but God, it's God that gives the increase. You see, we do everything that we can.

[ 14 : 54 ] And these that we're sending out around the world do all that they can. And we all know that our efforts alone can't change the world, but that God through our efforts absolutely can change the world because God gives the increase. And amazingly, because God, it's funny to me because in verse seven, he says, look, he says, neither is he the plant of anything, neither he the water of God, but God gives the increase. He says, okay, so you're not anything, you're not anything. God's doing all the work. And then he says in the next verse, and every man shall receive his own reward. Say you did nothing, you did nothing. And God's rewarding you for it.

No, that may be a slight paraphrase. But he's saying, you know, it's God that's doing the work, and yet God uses what we're doing. And God's going to reward these missionaries all over the world.

Cannon Bloom up in New York City. Okay. These others that we've seen all around the world, God's going to reward them for their ministry. But no less is God going to reward us who are faithfully serving here in Alpharetta. God's going to reward us as well. And verse 16, down at the end of the chapter, down later in the chapter says, know ye not that you are the temple of God. This, if you look at the context of this verse, when it says ye, it's not talking about you as an individual. It's saying you as a church. Know ye not, Vision Baptist Church, that you are the temple of God.

And that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Folks, let me say this to you. The work that we're in, this whole passage of scripture, he's using the illustration of those who are serving God, first of all, as farmers cultivating the earth, and then as builders building a building. And what he's saying is that Paul in one way, Apollos in another, the missionaries going out and us doing what we do here, we are all working together. To what end? We're building a temple for God.

There's no temple in Jerusalem today. But there's one coming. The scriptures are perfectly clear about that. There's a temple going to be built there. How exciting would it be to be a part of building that temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem? Would that be, I mean, to me, that would be very exciting.

[ 17 : 23 ] But that's what we're doing. You and I, those guys over there, us guys over here, right now, we are building a temple, not a temple made of blocks and bricks and mortar, but of souls. A living temple made up of lively stones, of living stones. We are building together, them and us together. We are building something glorious for God. And so, as we go through the conference, as we really wrap it up today, we need to make some decisions. And we need to make some commitments, okay? Now, giving's a part of it. And I just want to frame the giving like this.

The Ziniegas are going to Romania. I would love it if we could support them. The Clowers going to Mozambique. I just feel like we have to support them. I mean, what wonderful young people. And they're kind of like, they're our kids. They've been here for a couple years.

We've been training them. The McElwreaths in Atlanta, there are only three independent Baptist churches inside the perimeter. And these kids have just planted, these kids, this family has just planted one of those three. How can we not get on board, okay? The WICs doing medical missions around the world. That's fantastic ministry. And then Brother Gorham, I don't know him, coming this evening. Whether or not we can support them depends on the decisions that you and I as individuals make today. I think all of us would love to support them. But if Trent starts printing money, the government's going to have something to say about it, okay? It's got to come from somewhere, okay? But not just the giving. But brothers and sisters, we've got to rededicate ourselves. We've got to pray. We've got to really pray. That testimony this morning of how all of their stuff was confiscated, and then all night the Spirit of God worked. And by morning, those officials came back and apologized. Folks, that does not happen, okay? That is the hand of God. We've got to pray. We've got to pray. And we've got to continue to send our young people. And we've got to be active. Realize how important your role is, and be active in loving these young people. Our young people, the ones that are sent in, all love these kids. Disciple these kids. Take them under your arm. Teach them how to do the work of the ministry. How to live the Christian life. And we've got to continue to be the example of the church that God's called us to be, so that like Chase said, they could come here and see how it's done in Alpharetta, and then say, I'm going overseas, and I'm going to replicate that vision, that pattern in other countries.

That's right.