

Sermon Notes

Luke 10:38-42
"About Missions"
March 8, 2020

Introduction

- 1) When you hear the word "**mission**" what do you think?
 - a) Probably, the church's outreach of going beyond the local assembly, and/or denomination, to witness to the world of Christ's love.
 - b) This usually is done by the combination of two things:
 - i) **Evangelism**: The preaching of the Gospel to convert unbelievers .
 - ii) **Charity**: Helping with the physical needs of our neighbor.
- 2) These things are clearly taught in Scripture.
 - a) The famous "Great Commission" by the Lord Jesus to the Apostles, the founding leaders of the church, which states: "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.*" – Mark 16:15b-16
 - b) Or the famous parable of the Good Samaritan where we are to show love and mercy to everyone (and "everyone" means "everyone"). Luke 10:25-37
 - c) In the only history book in the New Testament, the "Acts of the Apostles" (note that word "Acts") we read of how the Apostles, especially Peter & Paul, and other commissioned church leaders, like Barnabas and Apollos, were sent out into the world to preach the Gospel.
- 3) There has been much debate about "missions" in the church, especially in modern times.

Brief Overview of "Missions" from Church History

- 1) It is interesting to note that from the early church through the Reformation (cir. 100 - 1600 AD) churches didn't really talk about "missions," though they certainly did it.
 - a) For example, the great ancient and Reformation creeds of the church do not mention "missions."
 - b) This is because the way we use "mission" and "missionary" (as an outreach) comes from the 17th & 18th centuries.
- 2) With the rise of denominational organizations and pietism there was an explosion of focus, thinking, and interest in "missions."
 - a) The creation of large trans-denominational missionary organizations:
 - i) The British "Church Mission Society" in 1799.
 - ii) The "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" in 1810.
 - b) The "Day Missions Library" at Yale University in 1891.
(One of the largest and oldest missionary libraries in the world.)
 - c) Denominations, like the "Christian and Missionary Alliance" from the 19th century, were created intentionally focusing on missionary work.
 - d) You can now get an academic degrees in "missiology."
 - e) The great debate between evangelical and liberal Protestants over the last 200 years was frequently fought over missions.
 - i) With the evangelicals focusing on Gospel evangelism and conversion.
 - ii) And the liberals focusing only on charity.
 - f) The interest and new debates about missions have only increased in modern times.
 - i) With new terms: Missional, Missiologist, Contextualization, Inculturation, Emerging, Organic Church, etc.
 - ii) With some tying into the "Church Growth Movement."
- 3) Has this focus on "missions" been a good or bad thing?
 - a) Pastor Doug, who is no missiologist, thinks it is at best mixed.
 - b) Evangelizing the world through the Gospel and charity to one's neighbors is clearly commanded in Scripture.

- c) However, Doug would contend, the purpose (or mission) of the church is:
 - i) The correct **worship** of God centered around the administration of the Gospel.
 - ii) The **discipleship** of the saints to grow in Christ by correcting them with the Law and evangelizing them with the Gospel.
 - iii) **Outreach** (missions) to the world through evangelizing the lost and charity to one's neighbor.
- d) This comes from God's Law and it is critical to get them in the right order. Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:1-21; Matt 22:35-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-28
- e) If #2 discipleship or #3 missions becomes primary then corruption will occur.
- 4) This is seen by the biblical word closest to "missions."

"Missions" in the Bible

- 1) If there is one biblical word that best would fit "missions" it is the noun "*diakonía*."
 - a) It comes from the concept to serve one's master or guest at a table like a waiter.
 - i) It was what Martha was doing when she was getting food ready for our Lord. Luke 10:40
 - ii) It is what the church does when it gives food to her widows. Acts 6:1
 - b) It is usually translated as mission, preparation, ministry, relief, service, and/or support.
- 2) You know the similar word meaning an official who does "missions."
 - a) It is not "missionary" however, which is a word not found in the Bible.
 - b) But "deacon", "*diákonos*", one that is a minister or servant or waiter, etc. Rom 12:7; 13:4; 15:8; 16:1; Phil 1:1; 1Tim 3:8,10,12-13
- 3) *Diakonía* is a much broader term than our modern word "mission" because it includes focusing on the church, as well as our neighbor. For example:
 - a) All churches are called to "missions." Rev 2:19
 - b) However, "missions" (*diakonía*) is the general term for "service" to the church, whatever that might be. 1Cor 12:5; 16:15; 2Cor 8:4; 9:1,12-15
 - c) Christians are called to particular missions or ministries. Col 4:17; 2Tim 4:11
 - d) Churches are to mission, or service, each other. 2Cor 11:8
 - e) Collecting money to help poor Christians in other churches is a mission. Acts 11:29; Rom 15:31
 - f) Our actions should never discredit the church's mission, or ministry. 2Cor 6:3
 - g) Being a pastor is a mission, or ministry. 2Tim 4:5
 - h) Angels perform missions, or ministry. Heb 1:14
- 4) *Diakonía* is fundamentally grounded in, and all about, the Gospel.
 - a) God's plan of the Gospel is described as a mission, or ministry. 2Cor 3:7-9
 - b) True missions, or ministry, comes from Christ Himself. 2Cor 5:18; 1Tim 1:12
 - c) The Apostles' main purpose was the mission of the Word, sent to preach the Gospel to all. Acts 1:17,25; 6:4; 12:25; 20:24; 21:19; Rom 11:13; 2Cor 4:1; 5:18
 - d) The preaching of the Gospel equips Christians for missions, or service. Eph 4:11-12

Conclusion

- 1) Should this church "do missions" (in the modern sense)? Yes! It is commanded.
- 2) However, has some of modern Evangelicalism created an unbalanced view of missions?
 - a) That we have lost the primary focus of correct worship and then church discipleship?
 - b) Maybe for pragmatic reasons? (To avoid theological debates about purity of doctrine? To focus on church growth and numbers? To go along with the worldly focus on individualism?)
 - c) Martha had a mission (feeding Jesus) but Mary's was better (listening to Christ).
- 3) Our mission at this moment is to come to evangelism in its purist form: The Lord's Supper! And from the feasting on the Gospel let us go forth serve Christ's church!