

All right. Well, yes, the small pulpit's up here. You gotta be careful about making fun of short people, though. Because Napoleon was short, and look at what he did. (Laughing) Right? You know what the average height of man was in Jesus' day? Well, it was probably 6'2", but that has nothing to do with it. (Laughing) No. It was 5'6"; 5'6" was the average height of man, and I would have been a tall guy in Jesus' day - by an inch, maybe.

All right. What are we doing? Oh, we're going to study the Bible together. We're going to be in Genesis 2. Go ahead and find that if you want to, but hold your finger there because I want to start off spending a little time over in Matthew 28. So find your place in Genesis 2, and we'll end up there, but we're going to take a little tour through Matthew 28 (the last three verses) to begin with tonight. We're going to look at the origin of missions or where missions began. And when you hear that, or if you saw the title up there on the screen, I imagine that, for a lot of you, it brings an image. Right? When you think of missions or missionary, you automatically sometimes have this preconceived notion of what that is. And depending on your background of what you've studied or what you've heard, maybe if you grew up on the old *National Geographics* and that kind of thing, you'd see the pictures there in the magazine of deep, darkest Africa and that kind of thing - bring those kinds of images to mind. Or maybe some of the accounts of Hudson Taylor and Jim Elliot, for example, and the Auca Indians. We, of course, know how that ended up. He was martyred for his faith. So it could, very often, bring these images - sometimes positive, sometimes negative.

But the fact of the matter is it's not about being a missionary. It's about being missions-minded. And every single one of us is called to do that - to be missions-minded. And we're going to discover tonight, Lord willing, through His Word, what that means exactly. What is it to be missions-minded? The dictionary defines missionary as a person sent on a religious mission, especially one sent to promote Christianity in a foreign country. So that's a lot of times the notion that we get about missionaries.

I love this account. Let me read this to you about a recruit who went into the mission field rather unprepared. A new missionary recruit went to Venezuela for

the first time. He was struggling with the language and didn't understand a whole lot of what was going on. Intending to visit one of the local churches, he got lost. But eventually he got back on track and found the place. Having arrived late, the church was already packed. The only pew left was the one in the very front row. So as not to make a fool of himself, he decided to pick someone out of the crowd to imitate. He chose the fellow who was sitting right next to him there, in the front pew. As they sang, the man clapped his hands; so the missionary recruit clapped too. And when the man stood to pray, the missionary recruit stood up too. And when the man sat down, he sat down. During the preaching, the recruit didn't understand very much of what was being said. He just kind of sat there and tried to look just like the man sitting next to him in the front pew. Then he perceived, at the end of the message, that the pastor was giving some sort of announcement. People clapped, so he looked to see if the man was clapping. He was. So the recruit clapped too. Then the preacher said some words that he didn't understand, and he saw the man next to him stand up. So he stood up too. Suddenly, there was a hush that fell over the entire congregation. A few people gasped. He looked around and saw that nobody else was standing, so he sat down. After the service, the preacher stood at the back of the church, shaking the hands of those who were leaving. When the missionary recruit stretched out his hand to greet the preacher, the preacher said (in English), "I take it you don't speak Spanish." The missionary recruit replied, "No, I don't. It's that obvious?" "Well, yes," said the preacher, "you see, I announced that the Costa family had a newborn baby boy, and would the proud father please stand up." (Laughing)

Yeah, so you kind of want to know what you're doing before you get there. Well, we want to talk about not only (like I said) what it is to be a missionary, as we sort of faltered with this young man, but what is it, exactly, to be missions-minded? You see, where I had you turn in Matthew 28, we're going to look at verses 18-20 right there at the end of the book, as well as the end of this chapter. But it's also the end of Jesus' ministry, as it were, after He has risen, and He is giving His disciples what we call the great commission. You see, the church is given a new task at this point. The disciples are going to be the ones that are going to take the news of the gospel, the very simplicity of the fact that Jesus not only came, lived and ministered, but that He died on a cross, and He rose from the dead, and that He was alive to that very day. That was going to be their message. That was going to be what they would spread and proclaim to their fellow man and to the nations around them. And, in preparing them, Jesus now gives them this commission. Four times in this great commission, Jesus uses the word "all." He says "all" authority.

He talks about "all" peoples. He talks about "all" that He commands. And He also mentions "all" the days.

So let's look at it briefly here, beginning in verse 18. First Jesus says to His disciples - "Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.' " So, as Jesus is getting ready to give His disciples this instruction, this command of how they are now to go out from this point, He wants to begin by laying a foundation for them. "Before I say anything, My dear disciples, you need to realize that this isn't some half-baked, haphazard command that I'm giving you. All authority has been given Me." It's not like Jesus is saying, "Hey, let's go out and try this, and see what happens." No. Jesus is saying, "Listen, this comes on the authority that was given to Me by My Father." How is it that Jesus earned this absolute authority? Through His death and resurrection. Right? He is the Savior. He is the Son of God. He is God the Son. And that authority was His and His to give. And, again, notice He uses the word "all" here. "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." There are no corners or crevices anywhere where Jesus' authority is not prevalent. Nowhere. That should give us great comfort as Christians, shouldn't it? The authority of Christ is everywhere, especially as we look at the world around us and the things that are going on. Good heavens! "What is this world coming to?" we might find ourselves saying. How desperately the world needs Jesus. Well, His authority is already there, even though sometimes it feels like it's been covered up. But it hasn't. You see, Christianity - what Jesus is calling His disciples to - is indeed a missionary faith because God's will is that no man should perish (2 Peter 3:9). So Jesus begins by saying, "I have all authority. It's all been given to Me."

"Now, from that place of authority, here is what I'm commanding you to do." Verse 19, " 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' " So once Jesus establishes the fact that He has authority to do this (not that the disciples doubted it at this point - they watched Jesus rise from the dead, they saw Him die, they knew He was in a tomb, then He appears to them right there in that upper room, and He speaks to them, and He has a meal with them, and He commissions them; He gives them command; He spends time with them), even this commission is given in the Galilee area, where Jesus said, "You go meet Me there. We're going to meet on a certain mountain." And they meet there together, probably overlooking the entire Galilee basin, looking at the Sea of Galilee itself; and off to the left, there, would be Capernaum, just nestled on the shore - that place where Peter and John and

James and Andrew had their homes. And as they're overlooking all of that, Jesus is giving this command to them. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." Now that word "go" is an interesting one because when we read it in the English, the picture we get is, "Okay, I'm standing here now, and now I'm told to go. So I need to go from here to there." But that isn't at all what that word is because the command is in the present participle in the Greek, which means "going." Now, if you read that in English, "Going therefore and make disciples," it's a little awkward. But if you put a little help in there, and say, "In the going, therefore go and make disciples," what was Jesus saying? He wasn't saying that, "You making disciples, that this commission I'm giving you is a command where you're going to start here and do nothing, and then you're going to go there and do something." Rather, "As you're going, in the going, as you live your life for Me, as you're walking with Me day by day and moment by moment, in the process of our relationship together, you and I, you bring others in. As you're walking with Me, you reach out and grab the hand of someone along the way and say, 'Hey, come with us.' And then they grab someone else's hand and so on and so forth." That's what Jesus is talking about. In the going. While you're going, make disciples. No matter where you are. In other words, this going is not an activity. "I'm going to go now." Well, that's an activity. No. It's a way of life. In the going, in the process of me walking with the Lord, I'm instructed to make disciples, I'm instructed to bring those alongside.

This word "disciple" means one that's taught, instructed to come alongside. It's kind of the idea of an apprentice. A disciple learns not only by listening but also by doing. Bringing someone alongside. You know, in apprenticeship they have a motto that they talk about, and I think it's used in discipleship too. It's a good one. It's, "Watch me do it. Then I'll watch you do it. And then you do it." Right? Does that make sense? "Watch me do it." In other words, "Come alongside. Watch what I do. Then we'll have you do it next, and I'll watch you to make sure that you're doing it right - can give correction along the way. And then once you have that, now you go do it." That really is a great description of what it is to make a disciple, to bring someone alongside. We are to "make disciples of all nations." Notice it says that. "Of all peoples, of all nations." That word "nations" there is the Greek word "*ethne*," where we get our English word ethnic from. So it's not as much about countries. It really is more about people or people groups. Well, you may really love the climate and the atmosphere in a country like the Philippines. But if you go there to be a missionary because you like the climate, you're going to be burnt out pretty quickly. If you don't have a heart for the people - if your heart doesn't break for the "*ethne*" that's there, the people that are there - then your ministry

will fall desperately short very quickly. We may all like southern California because of the climate. But if we're here as Christians only because we like the warm sun, even though we've had some rain lately, and we don't let our hearts get engaged to the people that are around us, I think southern California could be a very frustrating place to live. Don't you? I mean, where is everybody coming from?! It's thirty pounds of potatoes in a ten-pound sack! I'll let you think about that one for a minute. It's true though. I commute to work. Oh my goodness! Where are all these people coming from?! And if I didn't have a heart for the people that God has surrounded me with, that He has called me to this geographical area, to this "*ethne*" that's here, these people, I'd be frustrated and angry most of the time. And believe me, out there on the road most people are. They really are. So Jesus is not just sending us to nations or countries; He's sending us to people and people groups.

And notice that the mandate should never be abbreviated simply by saying "make disciples." Jesus didn't just say that. He didn't just say "make disciples." He said "and make disciples of all nations." That's a pretty big goal, isn't it? You see, Jesus' perspective to His disciples was not that He wanted them just to focus on a single person, that making these disciples happen. But rather, not this simple process, but an expression that has to stand as a whole. Disciple "all peoples." Jesus was setting what you might call a super-goal. Right? "I'm counting on you guys to disciple all the nations. Don't give yourself any limits. Don't give yourself any boundaries. You leave that to Me. You be diligent and obedient to what I've called you to. Make disciples of all nations. And then, once those people have come in, once those people have come into the flock, you are to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." They are then to identify with Christ in baptism. I love that. You know, God is so good to keep in mind that we're made of flesh and bones. Have you noticed that throughout the Word, and especially here again, Jesus even giving His disciples in this command? "By the way, you go make disciples. You bring in that spiritual harvest. But let Me give you something tangible for those new converts to hang onto. Have them get baptized." You know, that, to me, is what baptism is. It's something tangible that I can touch and feel and sense and do out of obedience to the Lord to identify with Jesus in His death and resurrection. That water that we're immersed in, we certainly can feel it. It's tangible. So God gives us that. He gives us something to hang onto. "Have you been baptized?" "Yes, I have." And we can give the date. And it's that neat moment in our lives - right next to, very often, our very conversion - our time of being baptized. So Jesus gives that tangible to them as well.

So, again, they're not merely mandated to just expose people to the gospel. They were commissioned to bring about results, a response - kind of a global following of Jesus from every people. What did Daniel say there in chapter 7:14? "Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed." Baptizing. Once believed, they are to be baptized.

And then He finishes off in verse 20 with the rest of this, " 'teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen." So here Jesus is giving His disciples that last bit of assurance, that last bit of instruction. The disciples are to be taught, not just brought in, not just "watch what I do." They are to be taught what? "All that I have commanded you," all that Jesus had commanded His disciples, and that includes, by the way, the commandments of God from the Old Testament. Because what did Jesus say of Himself? "I have not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17). Thank you. "I haven't come to destroy but to fulfill. And indeed not one jot or tittle will be removed from the law until all is fulfilled." So we're to abide by it. But the command of Christ - what was that, really? In teaching these new converts, in teaching these disciples, what is the command of Christ? Well, primarily and very simply, the universal command from Jesus is found in one single word. Do you know what that word is? What is it? What is it? Love. Ah, now you've got it. Absolutely right. It is found in love. "As I have loved you, you are to love one another" (John 13:34). "As I have given that example of servant and service to you, you are to serve one another." "How will the world know that you are My disciples? By your love for one another" (John 13:35). Love one another. When Jesus talked to the scribe, the lawyer, and they discussed the greatest part of the law (Matthew 22:37-40), what was the very first thing out of His mouth? "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." That was Jesus' command, and that's what is to be taught to the disciples. And I love the way it finishes here. Jesus then gives a promise of His spiritual presence that will be with them until their task here on earth is done. Notice He says, "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Jesus Himself would be with them. He had not just commissioned them to go out from Him, to go out away from Him to all the different places of the planet. He wasn't sending them away from Himself. He was saying, "We're all going to go together. I'm giving you this to do -

to go therefore, in the going, as you're going - make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them all the commands that I have given you, to love one another and to bring that love into the world that so desperately needs it. But don't worry because I'm going to be with you. I will be there every single day until the very end of the age." At the end of the gospel of Mark, in chapter 16, as that is finishing off in verses 19 and 20, this is what it says. "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them" - notice "the Lord working with them" - "and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen." That was Jesus' promise. And notice that He says, "lo, I am with you." That's not a promise now, is it? If it was a promise, He'd say, "I'll be with you. At some point, I'll be with you." That's a promise. When He said, "I am with you," it now becomes a fact. "I am. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

So this, then, sets up the pattern for the New Testament church. In terms of missions, in terms of being missions-minded, what is Jesus saying? That, as we are going, we're to make disciples that would identify with Jesus in baptism; that they would remain in fellowship so that they might be taught the truths of the faith; and that they would be able to then go out and win others for Christ and teach them as well and then bring them in. Do you see the pattern there? But unfortunately that's not the way it goes very often in the church. It's like we've lost that pattern. For the most part, what happens now is the church hires a pastor, and the pastor is the one that then is to bring in the disciples. He is the one that they pay to win the lost, to build up the saved. And the church members themselves then function as cheerleaders at best, but usually spectators. It's a sad commentary, isn't it? But we're all called to do this by Christ - every one of us. Because what happens when a new convert comes into that situation? Well then, they just join the spectators right there in the nosebleed seats when they're indeed called (just like the one that's teaching the Word) to share it. John 20:21, "So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.'" So that was where the church was instructed to begin.

But if we're going to really gain a missions mind here at Morningstar Christian Chapel, we need to figure out where it is that missions got started in the first place. And that's why I'd like you to turn back then now to Genesis 2. Let's go there together. Genesis 2, beginning at verse 15, let's read there. Now you know the story - creation up to this point - man has been created, he's there in the

garden, everything is just absolutely perfect and beautiful. In verse 15 it says, "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'" We're familiar with this, right? We're familiar with God setting this up in creation. You know, when God created, the statement is "all things were good." One thing that wasn't good yet was that man was alone, and God would take care of that very soon and create a woman for man - Eve for Adam. But up to this point, it was good, and that really should have been the end of the story. But then God does something interesting, doesn't He? He puts this little caveat, if you will, into the equation. And He gives man, in a sense - sets him up with an initial test. "You can eat everything in the garden, Adam. There's just one tree - one tree that you cannot eat of. It's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Don't eat of that one because when you do, on the day that you eat of it, you will surely die." Now, the tree was not put there as a teaser or a trap. It was put there, as I said earlier, as an inevitable test. You see, in order for Adam to be a moral, accountable being, he had to have a choice. God gave us, and instilled in us, our free will, which by the way He gives to all beings He created. Angels had free will, too. That's why we now have Satan and his demons, because Satan chose to use his free will to say, "No, I will" and they rebelled. Man is instilled with that same free will. But what good does our free will do if we don't have a choice? So God, in desiring for us to choose to obey Him, to choose to worship Him, to choose to walk with Him on a daily basis, sets up this parameter to give Adam, indeed, that choice. That necessary choice was placed before him.

Now we know what happened, right? Sin entered mankind. It entered the world. Man disobeyed the law of God that He had laid out. "But of that tree of the knowledge of good and evil, do not eat. The day that you do," the consequence was clear, "you will surely die." So I've always been curious. When Eve took that first bite of that fruit, why didn't she just drop dead right there? Was that not the consequence? "On the day that you eat, you will surely die." Well, God was not speaking solely of physical death. He was speaking primarily of spiritual death. Physical death would come. That had now entered mankind, and it now works on all of us from the day we're born, doesn't it? Those of us that are on the back side of the hill see that every day when we look in the mirror. It's just dragging on us more and more, isn't it? More and more. Lord have mercy. I just kind of walk by the mirror now, (Laughing) glance over. If I can see in a split second that all the

hair is in place, then I don't need to stop. "Yeah, I'm presentable. We'll just move right on. Who is that guy, anyway? When did my father take over my mirror?" (Laughing) So, death would come. But God, here, was speaking more specifically about that spiritual death. Actually, if you think about it, if Eve had dropped dead right there, it would have been just wouldn't it have? Really? I mean, it would have been just. That was what was warned; that was the consequence. But look already at God's incredible mercy that He's bestowing upon that which He created. You see, I don't know if it actually went this way, but my notion is when Satan saw that Eve didn't drop dead, he figured at that point he wasn't even going to waste time with Adam; he would just let her take care of that. And that's exactly how it went, too, when now the sinner became the seducer, and Adam got drawn in as well by his own choice, his own lust for wanting to know what was going on. And sin enters. Sin enters the world. Stanley Ellisen has a great quote. It says that "man was given cosmic responsibilities to have dominion over the earth, but he could not be trusted with a piece of fruit." Fairly sobering. Well that's the fall of man.

Now there's a dilemma happening. Turn over to chapter 3:7. In verse 7 it says (this is after the fall), "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings." So there's not only this entrance of sin but an awareness, a consciousness of it, that creeps in, that has now come into mankind. It's like poor little Johnny that was visiting grandma that one day, and he came upon - there on the coffee table - the old, old family Bible. I mean, this thing was old as far as he was concerned. It was grandma's, and he carefully opened it, and he very respectfully was turning these old, crinkly, crusty pages. And all of a sudden, something fell out of the Bible, and he goes, and he reaches and picks it up. And it had been a leaf that someone had put in the pages to press - probably a memory of some kind. And he runs to mom and goes, "Mommy. Look at what I've got!" And she goes, "Oh, sweetie, what do you have there?" And with astonishment in his eyes, he says, "I think I found Adam's underwear." (Laughing) And that's about all they could do for themselves in covering their own sin.

Now from verse 7 to verse 8, the narrative that's written by Moses really just kind of zips through it. But the space between verse 7 and 8 I would challenge to say is one of the most pivotal moments in the destiny of mankind. Man had sinned. He is now on earth doing his best to cover himself up. He realized that he had sinned. He now has the knowledge of good and evil, and he's made these fig leaf coverings for himself. But there's something going on in heaven. Verse 8 it says, "And they

heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Do you see what just happened there? You see, again, in the narrative we would just kind of read through that. "Well, they sinned, they made coverings, and then they heard God in the cool of the day." But there's a huge gap, if you will, between verses 7 and 8, of a decision that's being made in heaven. Man has just sinned. God created a perfect world, a perfect mankind, perfect creation. It is now tainted by man's choice. Did it surprise God? Absolutely not. Did He know it was going to happen? You bet He did. But in this moment, as God's there in heaven on His throne, He has a choice, too. Does He sit there and stay there and let man just wallow in his own sin for the rest of all eternity? Or does He do what He did? Does He get up from His throne and, in the going, keep His routine? He showed up in the cool of every day to walk with them. He didn't make an exception on this day.

But here's the huge difference because God is now not getting up from His throne and going to paradise; He, rather, is leaving the place of glory to walk into the place of darkness. It's the first picture of God condescending to man when He chooses to keep His appointment. If you don't, brothers and sisters, see the mercy in that, oh, my goodness. Because, like I said, it would have been absolutely just for God to just stay in heaven and leave us to ourselves. But He doesn't. So where does the missions heart begin? Right here. This is where it begins. I asked the question to our School of Ministry students - who was the first missionary? They came up with a lot of great stuff - Jesus, Paul. No. It's right here. God was the first missionary when He came to spend that time there with man in the cool of the day, probably the morning or the afternoon - somewhere in there; maybe in the morning, when the sun had just started to come up, when He would meet with man, and they would spend time in fellowship together. Well now God shows up - as it was His routine - out of mercy, out of incredible grace. He knew what had happened, and God knew what needed to happen to bring this now corrupt creation back into fellowship with Him. God knew that the death penalty was the only option, but He was unwilling to put that responsibility on mankind. Otherwise He would have left us to ourselves. Rather He comes because He knows that we would never, ever be able to appease His wrath against sin. Never. But from the foundations of the world, the plan was already rolling, the plan was already in place. God had already made provision for our stupidity as mankind. And thank the Lord He didn't break His routine, that He came here to earth and walked in the cool of the day.

Well, they had a conversation, didn't they? Verse 8, "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?' So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.'" We know the rest. As they begin to blame shift, and God's judgment then falls - first on the serpent, then on man, and then on woman. They were afraid. For the first time, they were not happy to see the heavenly Father. Boy, I can relate to that. There were days as a kid.....my mom was one of those wait-till-your-father-gets-home kind of a parent. She would deal with it. She could, too. But if it was something severe, it was "Oh, wait till your dad gets home!" And my father had an old '72 Ford pickup, and that thing was as loud as ever. You could hear it coming down the street for miles. And on those days that everything was good and happy, man, that was the greatest sound on earth. "Dad's home! Ah, Dad's home!" But on those days that mom had said, "Wait till you father gets home," that was the most dreaded sound you could ever imagine. "Where can I hide? What corner can I stay in?" And some days he'd come home, and he wouldn't be all that ready to whoop on us. But mom had this way of nagging him until he would just come and give us a good one just to get her to quit. (Laughing) Boy, there were those days when hearing him come was great. For Adam and Eve, this was not a time when they were looking forward to coming face to face with their Creator. They were afraid. They hid. "Where are you, Adam?" God knew where he was. He knew exactly what was going on.

But what was happening here, brothers and sisters, is that God was beginning this relentless pursuit of the salvation of mankind. It started here in the garden. And He did not give that pursuit up until Jesus, His own Son, said from the cross, "It is finished!" (John 19:30); that relentless pursuit for the salvation of mankind. That's what being missions-minded is all about. That's what it is to have the heart of a missionary, or, to be more specific, that's what it is to have the heart of God. I can tell you that a missionary who God uses (whether it's here at home or whether it's out on a foreign field somewhere) will not be successful in the least unless their heart breaks for the lost as much as God's does. That really is what ticks in the chest of every missionary. When they go to a place, to an area that God may call them to, when they travel somewhere - it could be just down the road - and they look at the humanity that's there, that people, and they see that those people are lost, their heart breaks and yearns so much for salvation for those people, they will not rest until that happens. That's the heart of a missionary because that

is indeed the heart of God. That's what drives them. That's what motivates them. That's what keeps them in the field, even in the most adverse situations. I mean, missionaries do crazy things. You've heard the stories. Even the missionaries that we have supported for years in Mexicali (and we go visit them on a regular basis) - John Barillaro and his wife, Laurie, and their two daughters, Dawn and Brandy - those two were only six years old when he moved his family lock, stock and barrel from Chino area down into Mexicali to just hang out in one of the colonias there. They were living in a camper for months, just parked in a vacant lot - he and his two blonde twin daughters, there in Mexico. And they would just set out a blanket under a tree, in the afternoon when the kids were getting off of school, and just do little crafts and do coloring pages with the kids there. That's how their ministry started. But there were times in the middle of the night, when John wondered, "What have I done, bringing my family to this place of danger?" really. But they stayed. Why? Because their hearts were breaking for the lost people of that city. Their hearts still to this day are breaking for lost souls, and that's what drives them, that's what keeps them there, that's what causes them to stay even during the hardest of times. And they, believe me, have had trial after trial as they're there. But I love Pastor John because he is such an example to me. He is so into just listening to the Lord and just watching God work; to the point where they have now built a 700+ seat sanctuary in this little colonia area. I mean, the thing stands - it looks like Noah's Ark - two story building, it's huge. And you look at that and scratch your head and go, "How on earth did this happen?" And when you ask John, he'll say the same thing. "I have no idea how on earth this happened except that God called us to it, He willed it, and He's making it happen." And it's a living testimony and a miracle of what God's doing in that little community. It's not about the building, it's not about that pretense. It's just about the provision that God will make when your heart is bent to the right place, when you indeed have a heart that's just breaking for the lost.

So guess what? God now calls the church to carry on the work. He started it there in the garden. He didn't want to let man go. He didn't want to put the burden of being able to pay the penalty on man's shoulders. He said, "No. We're going to do it a different way. I'm going to maintain My people. They're going to walk with Me in faith. And then when the right time comes, I'm going to send My own Son, and He'll pay the price. He will finish it." And once He was finished, that's the moment when that great commission comes into place (that we studied earlier this evening), and Jesus then sends out His church. He tells them to get out there. Are we consumed, and are we burdened with the realities of the lost?

Want to have a missions mind? Right here where you're sitting, I know that you can think of people right now, in your circle of influences, that are desperately lost, that don't know the Lord, that need to have Jesus as their Savior. Start there, and commit within your heart that in your going, as you're walking with the Lord, you're going to grab the hand of one of those people, and you're going to say, "Hey, come with me. I want to show you what it's like to live with Christ. I want to show you what it's like to walk with Him. Come with me. Come to our home. Come have dinner." Open up your homes. Open up your hearts. Open up your lives to those around you. That's where missions starts, people. In the backyard. We're going to be doing backyard missions the whole month of April. I'd invite you guys to get involved with it. We're heading out to El Hongo in the middle of this month. Come along. Experience what it is to be in another country, to minister to another culture, to see the missionaries themselves at work. If that doesn't inspire you, nothing will. But get involved one way or the other. Start right where you're at. Let the Lord break your heart for the lost - because God was, God is, and God will always be burdened for the lost soul. Because what does He say of Himself? The Lord wills that no, no, no man should perish but that all should come to eternal life (2 Peter 3:9). So missions started in the heart of God. That's the origin of it. When He stepped down to pursue mankind, on that day in the cool of the garden, when He called out to the first unregenerate man with three simple words, "Where are you? Where are you?" May we say that to the world around us. "Where are you? Do you know Jesus? Let me introduce Him to you." Keep going, folks. In the going.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
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