

Count for Zero

Sermon One

The Resurrection Story Needs to be Told

You've heard the story of the resurrection many times, but today let's look not at what happened, but what was said about what happened.

Scripture Passage: Matthew 28: 1-20

Imagine how frightening this was:

- They had seen Jesus beaten, crucified, buried and a large stone rolled in front of the tomb.
- They go to the tomb expecting it to be guarded. Instead they find an empty tomb and an angel.
- They are wondering what happened? What happened to the guards? Where was the body of Jesus? Had it been stolen?

As they try to figure out what happened the angel speaks to them, he starts to tell the story...

Matthew 28:5-7

As they rush from the tomb with the instructions to tell the disciples they begin wondering...

- Did this really happen?
- What if the rest of the disciples think we are crazy?
- What if they don't believe us?
- Was that really an angel?

Suddenly Jesus appears to them and adds to the story...

Matthew 28: 10

The resurrection had happened. And for the second time they had been told to go tell the disciples and share the story.

Meanwhile, as Mary Magdalene and the other Mary hurry to tell the disciples, the guards, who were supposed to be guarding the tomb, also had a story to tell.

Matthew 28:11

This had to have been embarrassing, they had failed in their jobs and possibly put their lives on the line as a result, even if it wasn't their fault. There had been a resurrection and it was an unbelievable story.

After the Priests heard the guard's story, they knew they had to protect themselves. A resurrection, that was impossible. Their reputation and that of Judaism hung in the balance. Now they had a story to tell...

Matthew 28:12-13

They had to tell some kind of story so they told the one they "hoped" would be true. The one the "wanted to be true, because the ramifications of the true story were unbearable to them.

The women did what the angel and Jesus had asked them to do, "Go and tell my brothers..."

The story they heard was hard to believe. Was it possible? What did it mean? Where was Jesus now? Why wasn't he with them? They were understandably confused.

He was with them...Jesus appeared to them at that moment, standing in their midst.

When they saw the resurrected Lord, they were shocked and frightened.

Matthew 28:17-18 (also see Luke 24: 36-37)

Now the disciples have a story to tell..the story of the resurrection.

Jesus broke their silence and commissioned them to go and tell the story.

Matthew 28: 19-20

This is the beginning of the Great Commission.

The ministry of the disciples began and those that heard the story were just as bewildered and amazed as the disciples who told it:

Acts2: 23-24

Acts 2:31-32

Acts 4:33

The story that needs to be told is not just of Jesus' birth, his remarkable life, or his brutal death....it's about the resurrection!

How important is THE resurrection?

The apostle Paul says that if it didn't happen, we are lost in our sins, for there is no forgiveness, we are dead men and our story is foolishness and worse than a lie...we are not only liars, we are to be pitied!

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Because the resurrection story needs to be told....

...and because there weren't enough of them to tell all of us...

...because the disciples couldn't be everywhere...

...and they could not speak through time, they wrote it down...

They wrote down the story of the resurrection because it needed to be told and has been told for 2,000 years.

Now it's your turn to tell the story

The story still needs to be told.

How will you tell it?

From the very foundations of the world... God intended for every people group, from every tongue, every tribe and every nation to hear his story before this part of earth's history comes to a close...

Matthew 24:13

Telling the story didn't start with Jesus and his resurrection, he merely repeated it.

Genesis 12:1-2

God tells Abraham that he will be a blessing to all nations.

All nations did not refer to land with political or geographical borders. It was the Hebrew word "ethnos" meaning a tribe or people group. It is where we get the word ethnic.

What God did through Abraham was not just a blessing to him and his descendants, but to "all ethnics" – all people: people of every tongue, every tribe, and every nation.

Evangelism and Missions isn't a New Testament concept. It didn't start with Jesus. It's a Bible concept.

Evangelism and Missions has been in the heart and mind of God from the very beginning.

Jesus, God's son, solves the problem of sin, reunites man with God, and changes us from what we were to what God wants us to be. His birth, life death, and resurrection are a story that needs to be told.

So, how does this life-story of earth and mankind end?

A reminder:

Mark 16:15

Now let's jump ahead to the end of the book...

Revelation 5:13

Reaching ALL people groups has always been the heart and aim of God

We should no longer have to ask "Who has been reached" we should start asking "who hasn't been reached?"
"Who hasn't heard the resurrection story?"

Current mission efforts are reaching lots of people, but mission efforts are stumbling over each other reaching the same people, and going to the same places as we've already been...

After 2,000 years there are still over 2,000 people groups with no translation of the Bible in their language.

With over 2,000 years of work, history and ministry...why haven't the vast resources of the church connected to the places without a single ray of light and truth?

We seem to have chosen to live being blessed without being a blessing to ALL PEOPLE.

96% of missionaries go where we've already been.

99% of every dollar given is aimed at reaching the already reached.

The resurrection story and the gospel are 2,000 years old...

Isn't it time we organize ourselves and do what we were told to do through the Great Commission?

The resurrection story needs to be told...who can you tell?

Let the church...let THIS church decide that it's time to say something.

- Let's join strategically with others so that there will be Zero unreached people groups...
- **Zero** languages without the gospel...
- **Zero** people who haven't heard the audacious plan of God, the resurrection, to restore, to reclaim, and to redeem us for Him!
- Let's make our church count for **ZERO**.

Count for Zero

Sermon Two

Getting the Word of God into the Hands of Men

Read: 2 Chronicles 34

When Josiah rediscovered the Scriptures...an entire culture was transformed when they had access to the Word of God.

Why?

Because "...Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." Romans 10:17 *NIV*

And it can change lives immediately: Consider the eunuch from Ethiopia who upon hearing the Word of God immediately demanded to be baptized or the crowds who heard the Word on the Day of Pentecost and instantly repented.

That said we can understand why it is critically and strategically important to get the Word of God into the language of the Sons of men.

Getting the Word into the hands of people is what great men have lived and died for:

- Martin Luther: translated the Word into German. For this, he was labeled a heretic.
- William Tyndale: translated it into English from Hebrew and Greek. For this he was strangled and his body burned.
- Jim Elliot: While trying to bring the Word to Auca Indians in Ecuador, he along with four other men was killed by the hostile tribe.

Just putting the Word of God in the hands of the people has been the dream, the drive and the goal of God working through Christians. In fact, this could be the very reason the printing press was invented...

There was a time when it took a year to produce a single copy of the Bible:

- There were no photocopiers...
- There were no fax machines...
- There was no texting, tweeting, pinning...it was done by hand!

It wasn't until 1455, when Gutenberg invented the printing press that the process improved. Within only 10 years the number of books went from about 50,000 to over 10 million...and the very first book off that press was the Bible.

Might God of providentially given such a tool for the spreading of the Gospel?

What was Gutenberg's take on this? Let's ask the man who invented the press...

He said: "religious truth is imprisoned in a small number of manuscripts, which confine instead of spread this public treasure. Let us break the seal which binds these holy things; let us give wings to truth in order that she may win every soul that comes into the world by her word, no longer written at vast expense, but multiplied everlastingly by a machine which never wearies."

And he went on to say: "Yes, it is a press, certainly, but a press from which shall flow in inexhaustible streams of the most abundant and most marvelous liquor that has ever flowed to relieve the thirst of men. Through it, God will spread His word; a spring of pure thrush shall flow from it; like a new star it shall scatter the darkness of ignorance, and a cause of light hitherto fore unknown to shine among men."

The printing press brought about a revolution in the church because it allowed a revolution in the lives of those who had access to it.

- When the seed of the Word was planted in Josiah and the people of Israel, a revolution in their culture was brought forth...
- When the seed of the Word was planted by making that word available through the printing press...a revolution of reformation was brought forth...
- When the seed of the Word was planted by our newest technology – a new revolution is now budding that will bring forth a fruit we have not yet imagined.
- Soon, every tongue, tribe and nation will have the Word and the fruit born by it will be the completion of the Great Commission...

Another revolution is about to happen today...not with the press, but with a new technology now available to the church to put even more Bibles, in more languages, in more hands than ever before.

This new revolution may well be bigger and have a greater impact than any previously:

- Technology allows Scripture access anytime...anyplace
- You can get 100's of languages on a single mobile device.
- YouVersion Bible is available in over 215 languages.
- There are now 1.4 billion Smartphones in use around the world.
- Technology is advancing so rapidly that nations that want to block access to the gospel are having trouble keeping up.
- There are countries where you can't buy a Bible but you can download an app.
- YouVersion is accessed by every single county at least once every month. There is no part of the world where people are not using that app.

The generation that is recognized as the least Bible-engaged could quickly become the most engaged ever!

Maybe you're a Christian, and like Josiah...

- When he found the Word, the Word found him.
- He heard the Word, just as you have
- He responded to what he heard, just as you have
- But have you done this? He shared it with others!

Having the Word is necessary in order to share it with others. How can we expect others to share the Word if they don't have it?

- There are still 2,000 languages that need to be started
- There are still 1 billion people who do not have the Scriptures in their heart language.

Being faithful to the Word is one thing, but being faithful with it is another!

Josiah was fearful: "Great is the Lord's anger this is poured out on us because our fathers have not kept the Word of the Lord; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book."

Maybe we have reason to be afraid too. Perhaps God is brokenhearted, that in the church today, with all its resources, knowledge, size and power to fulfill the Great Commission, after 2,000 years we still haven't done it.

Whether you are a king named Josiah having the Scriptures read to Him, or an Ethiopian eunuch being taught the Word of God in the back of a chariot... the Word will make a difference!

Getting the Word of God into the Hands of Men...

- This is the work of men for the kingdom of God
- We need to understand this work is not only for the benefit of the Kingdom of God but it benefits the Coming of the Kingdom of God!

What can we do? Pick a people group and provide a Bible verse...or a whole book of the Bible... or a whole New Testament.

While some men have died for it – others are dying to get it.

Now is the time to begin – so that by 2025 – there will be no Bible-less people. Be a part of Count for Zero!

Count for Zero

Sermon Three

The Next “Fullness of Time”

Story: A farmer grew fruit to sell. The more he sold the more money he made. The more money he had, the happier he was. The happier he was, the more he wanted to grow.

Finally, his focus was only on gathering more and more and more fruit. Until he stored so much it began to rot in the barn. Eventually more rotted than sold and his business ground to a halt. He forgot – he wasn’t in the harvesting business- he was in the fruit-selling business.

The church has forgotten that we are in the information or good news business, not the congregation gathering business.

We tend to measure our success by the size of our congregation...or even the number of congregations we have rather than how we are reaching the real goal, the Great Commission.

There comes a time when we realize that we haven’t been doing what we are supposed to...and that moment changes everything.

There is a story about a man who knew the moment his role had changed. He was driving and his father was the passenger as they made their way to the store. Someone unexpectedly cut in front of them in traffic and he jammed the brakes on. As everything and everyone in the car lurched forward he instinctively reached out his hand to prevent his father from hitting the dashboard – just as he would have done if he had one of his small children with him. At that moment he realized a shift had occurred in his relationship with his father.

There comes a moment in time when we realize our children have grown up.

There comes a time when we mark a graduation from one level to another.

There comes a time when pastors and churches realize something has changed for them too.

Looking at the Bible, we find such a day in the people of God...a day we realized something had changed...we had grown up and God was going to be working with us in a way He had not done before.

Read: Galatians 4

We gather our congregations- more and more together and forget to send them out with the message.

Denominations may be more concerned with more churches than messengers.

There came a time when God’s dealings with the sons of men changed.

Instead of sending a patriarch, a law-giver, judges or kings...God sent His Son.

Because of Him, we can become Sons too! We were redeemed, adopted as sons so that we inherit the kingdom of God!

When was the message made known? When the time was right.

This is a phrase we’re more accustomed to using when a woman is pregnant. We tend to count-down the months and weeks and days until she is ready to deliver. When nine months has come we may tease her about being “ready”, but, in truth, we could say, “her fullness of time has come.”

Nine months is not how long it takes for the mother to be ready to deliver. No, nine months is how long it takes for the baby to be fully formed and ready. Until then, the baby isn’t ready...and that time also gives the parents opportunity to be ready for the baby’s arrival.

Just as new parents want to have a nursery ready to receive their new child – God wanted earth to be ready for His.

The fullness of time was when the Romans had laid roads throughout their empire making travel more efficient... when the Jews had scattered throughout the known world delivering a message of the coming Hope in the form of a promised Messiah...it was when the Greeks had laid the foundation of a single language that could be used throughout the land.

These ingredients formed the “readiness” of earth...for the arrival from heaven. With the roads the evangelists and heralds of the gospel could now easily travel everywhere to make their good news heard...and with the one language they could communicate with people anywhere...and what they communicated was the good news of the fulfillment of that hope that had already been made known to them!

Earth was ready to take the gospel everywhere, to all people...and THAT was when God sent His Son into the world.

When will God send His Son a second time?

The answer? In the fullness of time...when Earth is once again ready?

Technology is helping us to get ready. If we ask when it will happen, we must also ask how to get there. What will it take to get us to the next fullness of time?

The disciples also wanted to know...so they asked?

What sign should we look for?

Read: Matthew 24:14

The good news of Jesus' coming, his freeing us from the slavery to sin...the message that we're ready to inherit the kingdom...must be preached to all nations! When that happens...then, the fullness of time will come.

Are you asking yourself “Haven't we reached that point already?”

“Aren't we doing missions and reaching lots of people?”

The answers? “No”, “Yes”, and “No”.

We're getting close but we're not there yet.

Yes, we are doing missions just like we have been doing for hundreds of years.

Yes, we're reaching lots of people but there are still over 2,000 languages or more that don't have the good news available to them. Over 1 billion people on planet earth have never heard the gospel and many of them are not only unreached, but they are un-targeted. That is, we're not even thinking about how to reach them.

This will change...

Read: Revelation 14:6

Maybe this is a picture of how the job will be done. We now have the transmissions waves of technology flying across the earth through things like a simple cell phone. That little item we carry in our pockets, purses, or strap to our belts. We carry it to go shopping, to the office, to ball games, the grocery store, the museum, theaters...and many of you have it with you this morning, in church.

Think about the time in which we live...that simple cell phone has the ability to communicate almost anywhere in the world.

A Bible app can be installed in mere seconds from anywhere on the globe and shared with people in thousands of languages.

While we are currently reaching every one of the 195 countries in the world today with Bible apps, there is still more to do...

Just as the printing press was called the invention of the millennium because of the revolution it brought about for mankind, perhaps it's the ubiquitous iPhone and Android that could be the greatest inventions in this millennium because they can be used to bring the gospel to every person on the planet.

Currently there are over 7 billion cell phone subscriptions in the world that means there are now more cell phones than people on planet Earth. Through cell phone technology we can reach the 1.1 billion people who have never heard the name of Jesus in the next 3 years!

A 14 year old boy developed a cancer diagnosis method that is 40 times cheaper than anything else and is 100%

effective. He gave himself to this incredibly worthy cause while other 14 year olds were discussing getting ice cream, their latest Snap chat, or the newest multi-player game. This young man was propelled by something bigger than himself while others were wasting time. One of the striking statements this young man made was, "I am compelled to do this."

What has Christ compelled you to do?

We may well be within sight of the next "fullness of time."

More can be done now, in our lifetime, than all that has been done in the last 2,000 years.

What did people look for at the first coming?

What are we looking for at the 2nd coming?

Are you compelled to do "something" for "nothing"?

Are you willing to do something for Zero?

Count for Zero

Sermon 4

Reaching the Rest

Read: Acts 10:1-8

- God first moved in the heart of Cornelius, a Gentile seeker.
- Read: Acts 10: 9-16
- God then moved Peter, a Jew, to answer Cornelius' prayers.
- Read: Acts 10: 27-29
- Peter let God change his heart and overcome his prejudice.
- Read: Acts 10: 34-36
- Peter shared the story of Jesus and called them to respond.
- Read: Act 10: 39-48
- The Holy Spirit confirmed the genuineness of the Gentiles' faith.

Peter baptized the Gentile believers and stayed to teach them.

The idea of reaching the Gentiles was something new to Peter, but NOT to God. It was his idea from the beginning, even as he chose Abraham and his descendants; he had the Gentiles in mind.

Look again at the calling of Abraham.

Read: Genesis 12: 2-3

Notice there are two parts to this covenant:

- 1) "I will bless you"
- 2) "ALL peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (NIV)

To get a proper perspective of what God is saying and how many nations this includes simply ask, "How many is all?"

All is NOT: a lot, a bunch, a great number of, or a great majority. All is ALL, every single one!

God is saying "ALL GROUPS OF PEOPLE"

The Bible says, "people of every tongue, tribe and nation."

God is not looking for lots of people in heaven – He is look for people of **every** tongue, **every** tribe and **every** nation.

The idea of reaching all nations is not just a New Testament idea; it is one that is throughout the entire Bible.

Let's take a look at all the places in the Old Testament the we see God's heart for "all people"...

Read: Psalm 67: 3-5

Read: Psalm 67:6-7

Read: 1 Chronicles 16:23-24

Read: Psalm72:11

Read: Isaiah 61:11

Read: Jeremiah 3:17

Read: Daniel 7:13-14

The Old Testament is filled with God's heart to reach all nations...even the Bible stories we grew up with. We were

taught part of the lesson, but not the whole lesson God wanted us to see. For instance:

In the story of David and Goliath, missions are taught...

Read: 1 Samuel 17:46

In the story of Daniel and the Lion's Den, missions are taught...

Read: Daniel 6:25-26

Even when the Israelites were set free from Egypt and left...they didn't go alone...

Read: Exodus 12:37-38

God has always had a heart and a home for all people. They (we) have always been a part of His plan.

Missions wasn't an "after-thought" – it was the main thought of God!

Eventually even the prophets recognized they had not accomplished God's goal of reaching ALL the people and were shamed by their failure.

Read: Isaiah 26:18

Isaiah recognized that they had not brought deliverance to the people, only wind, only talk.

Story:

Two men were playing golf; one hit the ball right onto the green while the other player's ball went into a gully far below the green. The one below couldn't see the hole from where he was so the one on the green reminded him to merely "aim for the flag". The man below took time to select the perfect club and after a couple of practice swings hit the ball beautifully...it went streaking upward and came down right next to the flag. It was only after he climbed up to the green that he saw that his ball had indeed landed next to the flag, but he saw his laughing buddy holding the flag 30-feet away from the hole!

The lesson? It doesn't matter if you hit the target...if it's the wrong target.

4,000 years ago God let Abraham, and us, know His heart was to reach every people group.

2,000 years ago Jesus confirmed that goal when he said, "Go into all the world..."

How are we doing?

Christ told us to accomplish one thing. We aren't done yet.

Are we making progress? Yes.

There are 12,000 ethno-linguistic groups in the world

6,000 have been reached (meaning 2% or more are evangelical believers)

3,000 groups have evangelism taking place

However...there are 3,000 that are still unreached, unengaged, and no-one is planning to reach them.

The good news is that something is happening in this generation! In just the last 7 years:

- 256 organizations sent over 9,000 full-time workers into the field
- 900 unreached groups have been engaged
- 19,700 churches have been planted
- There are 850,000 new believers

What are the roadblocks to reaching the rest?

- They are in the most difficult regions to reach
- There is heavy opposition from non-Christian radicals

- Mission Boards have no more people to send
- There is a fear of failure
- There is an assumption that someone else will do it
- People are unaware that there are still groups to be reached

Peter needed a “Cornelius” to give him a kick-start...but let’s not forget Jesus didn’t tell the nations to “come”, he told us to “go”.

Cornelius begged Peter to come and share the gospel. There are people today who are begging for someone to come and share the gospel with them. Just like Peter we need to recognize the “themes” of the world and work to reach them with the gospel.

Peter, Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and other early church fathers, Calvin, Luther, and more were committed to living their lives for Zero...

Zero cultures without a church

Zero languages without the gospel

Zero people without hope

Zero is the target of heaven

Count for Zero

Sermon Five

Intentional Giving-Intentional Generosity

There are few topics that frighten pastors as much as this one, not because it's controversial (we all know what we should do), but because human "defense shields" immediately go up when the topic is announced.

Pastors are frightened by it because we know these shields go up, people don't want us to talk about it and yet, if we don't then we don't preach the "whole counsel" of God.

The topic: Money. Not how to get it, but how to give it.

Today you are not going to hear the usual, same-old, sermon and song about it.

Today, let's talk about this sensitive subject without getting defensive, hard-hearted, bored or without tuning out.

Knowing we need to base all our thinking on Scripture, let's turn to a different reference to see the attitude of the earliest Christians.

Read: 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 (we recommend reading from the NLT for this portion of the sermon)

- First, the kind of giving we'll look at is one initiated by God
Read 2 Corinthians 8:1
- Incredible giving is done with incredible joy
Read 2 Corinthians 8:2
- Incredible generosity is not coerced, guilt-ridden or manipulated – it's by their own will
Read 2 Corinthians 8:3
- When done this way, leaders don't beg the people – the people beg them
Read 2 Corinthians 8:4
- Done this way intentional giving explodes beyond perceived expectations
Read 2 Corinthians 8:5
- Intentional giving "rounds out" all the other good things in your Christian life
Read 2 Corinthians 8:6-7
- What I'm saying today is by no means "pressure from the pulpit"
Read 2 Corinthians 8:8-9
- I'm not going to say you "ought" to do anything, but I do offer a suggestion in wisdom and love
Read 2 Corinthians 8:10-15
- Your excitement has been contagious – you have "us" excited
Read 2 Corinthians 8:16-19
- Your gifts will be safeguarded and used wisely...not misspent and not misappropriated
Read 2 Corinthians 8:20-21
- Your joyful giving has made me proud of you and I cite you as an example to others
Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-2
- Here's a rule-of-thumb for intentional, generous, outlandish giving that comes from the heart
Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8
- Some things are remembered – some things are remembered forever
Read 2 Corinthians 9:9
- This is a new kind of giving. This is God-enabled giving
Read 2 Corinthians 9:10

- This kind of heart-giving, this intentional generosity can become so God-enabled that it keeps on being supplied. The joy you have from it can keep on coming.
Read 2 Corinthians 9:11
- The results?
Read 2 Corinthians 9:12-14
- This is the Christian living that is too good for words
Read 2 Corinthians 9:15

What's going on here? Why are we talking about this?

In the day these words were written there was a great need in Jerusalem. There were many people who had a great need and Christians were called on and enabled by God to meet their need.

For several weeks now we've talked about the fact that there are over 2,000 people groups whose language has never had the name of Jesus in their vocabulary...there's not a Bible in their hands...and there is little, or no, thought of them among missionaries.

They are unreached, unengaged, Bibleless, churchless, and hopeless unless we make a difference.

Our God-enabled, joyful-hearted, non-manipulated giving can make the:

- Bibleless people will have a Bible
- Churchless people will have a church
- Hopeless people will have hope

The giving has already begun:

10 years ago there were less than 10 new translations done per year, last year there were over 70 translations completed.

20 years ago National Foundations granted \$250 million to Christian causes, in the last 10 years it has grown to \$3.5 billion.

Right now there are over 600 Evangelical churches to every unreached people group...that means that if just 1 out of 600 evangelical churches were to adopt an unreached people group, we have enough churches right now to reach every one.

It is possible that in our lifetime, with intentional, audacious generosity we could see...

The whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.

Has this kind of thing ever happened before? Yes!

When God wanted something extraordinary to happen – he caused extraordinary giving

He gave Moses a design for building the Tabernacle – a place to meet his people

Read: Exodus 35:5

God is now building a new building...

Not a temporary tabernacle, but the Church, the entire body of believers

Instead of precious stones, it's being designed and formed by people of all nations, blending a harmony of languages, colors and cultures in glorious anthems of praise...

Now is the time to finish the work...

The whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.

Count for Zero

Sermon 6

Getting Involved

Read: Acts 8:26-29

Notice that it was God who brought Philip and the Ethiopian together.

Read: Acts 8:30-31

Note that the Ethiopian was curious but confused by the Scriptures.

Read: Acts 8:32-35

Philip explained the Scriptures and shared the good news of Jesus.

Read: Acts 8:36-38

The Ethiopian publically expressed his faith through baptism.

Read: Acts 8:39-40

The Ethiopian joyfully returned home and Philip was called somewhere else.

It seems that God puts certain people in our paths

- Some for a reason
- Some for a season
- Some for a lifetime

It's important to know why people are in our lives so that we can meet a need that they have, have our own needs met, and so we won't be disappointed when it is time to part ways.

When someone is in your life for a season it is usually for mutual help, growth and sharing.

These are people you can count on for support and encouragement even though they may be in your life for a short time.

When someone is in your life for a reason it is usually because of something you have said, something they have said or because God has placed them there with purpose. If they seem like a "God send", they probably were.

They may have come to assist you through a difficult time, give you guidance through a circumstance of offer support whether it is physical, emotional or spiritual.

Usually something will happen to bring that relationship to an end. We should consider ourselves blessed for what that relationship gave us and move on.

Philip was enjoying a remarkable spiritual awakening in Jerusalem, but the Spirit of God moved him on. For a purpose! Absolutely!

A gentile reading Scripture needed help to understand them, Philip was his answer. Philip was his "God send".

After helping the gentile, Philip moved on.

It seems that Philip's ministry was to be a "reason" for gentiles.

Peter and Paul also had ministries based on being a "reason" for gentiles. (Read: Galatians 2 and Acts 9)

What about you?

Are you someone's "reason"? Who can you help?

God has never been quiet about his desire to reach all people.

Read: Genesis 12:2-3

As we look through Scripture we see that God considered the gentiles a prime target.

- Elijah helped a gentile widow
- Elisha healed a gentile leper
- Boaz married a gentile woman Ruth, who is in the lineage of David and Jesus
- Solomon was sought by gentiles seeking the wisdom of God

We saw that the prophets know this...

Read: Isaiah 26:18

Jesus had them in mind when He commissioned us to “Go into all the world...” Mark 16:15

Now God is bringing them to mind again.

This generation has more manpower, technology, financial resources, training and insight to reach every tongue, every tribe and every nation and any prior generation.

How is that being used to expand the kingdom?

Right now 155,000 people are becoming believers every day.

There are 60,000 new churches planted each week

Statistically, 11 people are watching the Jesus movie every second

God is calling us to reach the whole world, not just the US

We are seeing God write a new chapter in the history of His church.

The World Christian Encyclopedia says of all the world evangelization that has ever been done:

- 50% has happened in the last 200 years
- 50% of that has portion has happened since World War 2
- 50% of that has happened since 1980

God is calling us to join him to make sure:

- There are zero people groups without a Bible
- There are zero people groups without a church
- There are zero people groups with Scripture in their language

The only way we know anything about Philip is because his story was told.

What will your story be? Will you be there for a “reason”?

What will your legacy be? What will the legacy of this church be?

God has sent you an invitation to join him. How will you respond?

Note:

Churches should have a plan for what they can and will do to follow up on this before they get to this Sunday. Perhaps you can start a technology ministry that allows people to “ship your old phone to us” where people can donate unused cell phones that can have a Bible app downloaded into it in a language of a people group.

