

### Lecture 4

The church at Jerusalem had refused to do God's will, and now God cuts their supply off. In five short chapters, approximately eight years, the Church at Jerusalem moved from bountifulness to bankruptcy.

Before long God moved the operational headquarters of His work from the Jerusalem Church to the Antioch Church and the Church at Jerusalem fades into oblivion. God took some folks, sent down the road or across town, and started another church that prospers while the old church dies.

The fifth and final thing we look at which the Lord did after He got the church out of Jerusalem is found in Acts 13:1-4. Here we find **the Workers were Sent**.

*"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers.... And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."* Here we have the account of the first church-sent missionaries.

The disciples were given the Great Commission at Jerusalem in Acts 1:8, but there is not a missionary sent out by the church until Acts 13, approximately eleven years later. These were not sent by the church at Jerusalem, but by the Church at Antioch.

It is also noteworthy that the Holy Ghost never spoke to the Church after Pentecost where He prepared the church to carry out the Great Commission.

But now the Holy Ghost speaks to the new Church at Antioch and gives them the opportunity to carry out His commission. Thank God they were willing to obey His command and send out Barnabas and Saul.

There is no record anywhere in the Bible of the church at Jerusalem ever receiving or sending out a mission offering, or sending out a Missionary.

Antioch sent out Paul, and on his second missionary journey he brought the Gospel to the continent of Europe. Our forefathers heard it, believed it, and were saved by it, and passed it on down from generation to generation until it came to us and we are saved because the Church at Antioch obeyed our Lord's Great Commission.

What kind of Christian are you? There are really just two kinds. Those like the Church at Jerusalem and those like the Church at Antioch. The **major difference** between the two churches is the Church at Jerusalem majored on MIRACLES, MONEY, and MULTITUDES.

The Church at Antioch majored on MISSIONS, MISSIONS, and MISSIONS. They did not care much for temporal things at home, but concentrated on the souls of lost men, women, boys, and girls. They were willing to deny themselves of some things so that the lost could hear the Gospel.

Determine that by the grace of God, your church will not be like the Church at Jerusalem, but like the church at Antioch.

### **New Material Covered by Moreau Motifs of Missions**

We are going to look at some matters some motifs that have to do with the theology of missions. A motif is a recurring pattern or element that reinforces the central guiding theme- stressing a wholesome picture of the Theology of missions.

#### **I. Motif 1-The Kingdom of God-**

Normally thoughts of the kingdom are linked with end times. When we seek to understand that kingdom, there are several paradoxes that describe it. A **paradox** is a seeming contradiction or a statement that has two parts that seem to mean the opposite of one another.

We are in the world but not of the world (Jn.18:36).  
It comes as a free gift, but demands all that we have (Lk.12:30-33).  
There is a kingdom that is already present (Luke 17:21) and yet one is still coming in the future (Matt.6:10).

The most important consideration is that the kingdom, including its establishment and timing is God's—and Christians are privileged to participate in the process.

The kingdom of God as a motif runs through every layer of the foundational mission focus. It grows or is increased by evangelistic and church-planting activities. It represents an attitude toward life that puts God first in all that Christians do, enabling personal and corporate growth.

#### **II. Motif 2-Jesus**

The Christian faith is not centered on a book or a set of ideals. It is centered on a person—a person unique in the history of the world, a person who is so important that most of the world splits its reckoning of time around his coming.

Jesus is central not only to the Christian faith but also to the mission that is integrated into that faith. The One who relinquished deity to be born as a baby and laid in a feeding trough, who died on behalf of all humankind, who will return to gather his own, and who gave his followers their marching orders **has established forever his priorities for the church** that he birthed through his life, ministry, and death.

Jesus enabled missions through His sacrificial death.

The Great Commission demonstrates that Jesus's concerns went far beyond the house of Israel. He came for all human beings and calls his followers to join his harvest work of bringing them into the kingdom of God.

What is the spiritual kingdom of God?

**Romans 14:17**

*“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”*

Finally, we note that Jesus permeates all three levels of our missional foundation:  
(1) it is he who both calls people to himself and commands them to go and make disciples;  
(2) discipleship and growth, both individual and corporate, come through obeying all that he taught and through teaching others to do as He says.  
(3) his example of salt-and-light living inspires Christians to keep their focus Godward as they live lives that cause people to glorify the King of kings.

**MOTIF 3: THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit's role in mission is another crucial motif.

- 1- He is the agent who empowers Christians for mission and makes mission workable.
- 2- It is the Spirit who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11).
- 3- He ripens fields for harvest who do not know Christ, wooing them to commit themselves into his care (Rev. 22:17) and thereby paving the way for evangelistic fruit by means of his invisible work in the hearts of people around the world.
- 4- It is the Spirit who guides the church in all truth (John 16:13) and in its missionary labors (e.g., Acts 16:7).
- 5- He works inside the human heart, empowering Christians for witness (Acts 1:8), motivating them to witness and giving them words to say (Matt. 10:17-20).
- 6- The Spirit also gifts the church for the purpose of growth both in numbers (Acts 2:14-41) and in maturity toward Christlikeness

The Holy Spirit permeates all three levels of our core theology of mission:

- (1) He convicts those in the world of sin and woos them to come to Christ;
- (2) He empowers Christ's followers to witness and acts as agents of change in the lives of those who have committed themselves to following Jesus.
- (3) He prays for Christians with groanings too deep for words, guiding them in making wise decisions about the best way to live salty lives that shine the light of God into dark situations.

#### **MOTIF 4: THE CHURCH**

What is the church? Conventionally, the term local church is used of a group of gathered believers. Keep in mind that at the time of the writing of the New Testament, there were no church buildings. Jews who came to Christ initially used synagogues as places of worship, and many believers also gathered in homes (Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15).

In light of those facts, the local churches of that time looked radically different from modern churches in suburban North America.

In addition to the **local church**, Christians speak of the **universal church**.

1- What is the local church?

2-What is the universal church?

Every local church is both organism and organized.

As an organism, the church is a communion of believers—community is the key. It is the "body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23) and "living stones of the temple of God" (1 Pet. 2:4-8).

Good local churches:

They preach salvation and nurture Christians.  
They also need leaders and a system of formal organization for their earthly operation.

As we discussed previously, the church was long understood to be the exclusive place for God's work in mission. However, although God indeed works through the church, he also works where the church does not yet exist (see, e.g., Acts 14:17).

#### **What, then, is the purpose of the church?**

Essentially, the church submits to Christ (Eph. 5:23-24), who is its head (Col. 1:18). How this is done can be seen in terms of three relationships:

- (1) the church's relationship with God,
- (2) the church's relationship with itself,

(3) the **church's** relationship with the world.

In relation to God, the church is to send forth praise and glory to God for his merciful dealings with people (Eph. 3:20-21) and to make his wisdom known even in the heavenly realms (Eph. 3:10-11).

**There are two components of the church's relation to itself.**

**I. The first is edification.** God gifts and appoints people in the church (1 Cor. 12:28).

- 1- They lead the church in its responsibilities to build up the saints (1 Cor. 14:12, 26; Heb.10:24),
- 2- equip them for service (Eph. 4:11-16)
- 3- care for its own who are in need (Acts 12:5; 1 Tim. 5:1-16; James 1:27).

**II. The second is that of purification.**

The church is to allow Christ to cleanse it so as to be a spotless bride (Eph. 5:25b-27), morally (Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 5) and doctrinally (Acts 15:22-29; 2 Tim. 2:16-18).

**In relation to the world**, the church is to call the peoples of the world to repentance by proclaiming the kingdom. Bought with Christ's blood (Acts 20:28), the church is the agent that God has chosen to call the world to repent and turn to Christ (Matt. 28:16-20) by sending people out into the world to preach the Gospel (Acts 13:13).

At the same time, the church is to live as a sign of the reality of the kingdom—being salt and light in a darkened world (Matt. 5:13-16).

**MOTIF 5: SHALOM**

The Hebrew term shalom expresses not only a sense of personal peace but also a sense of community peace and wholeness. As we noted “Shalom” is concerned with the spiritual (salvation), the physical (healing), the psychological (wholeness), and the social (justice and freedom from war).

Ultimately, this sense of peace is reflected not so much in the circumstances around us as it is in our ability to face them knowing that even in the valley of death God is walking with us and, when necessary, even carrying us.

**Micah 6:8**

*8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

**To understand missions best, we need to see the reality of the kingdom conflict between Jesus and Satan (Matt. 4:23-24).**

### **HOW IS THAT CONFLICT SEEN IN JESUS'S LIFE?**

- 1- When he resists Satan's temptations (Matt. 4:1-11; 16:21-23; Luke 4:1-13)
- 2- When he drives out demons (Matt. 4:23-24; Mark 1:39; Luke 6:18-19). It also is seen
- 3- When he teaches that the kingdom is among us (Matt. 12:22-29; Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:14-22)
- 4- When he proclaims that he has come to earth to set the captives free (Luke 4:17-21).

Shalom in this sense relates to the fact that Christians have been set free and are called to participate in the kingdom conflict of setting others free by calling them to bond to Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; John 8:31-37).

In spiritual warfare we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16).

They are to live such exemplary lives that others will see them and praise God as a result (Matt. 5:16). They are to expose Satan's kingdom of darkness by proclaiming the kingdom of God and the light of God's word so that the world may see God living through them.

### **Of great significance in this is the need to live their lives by God's rules rather than by those of people.**

#### **What are some of God's rules?**

- 1- This includes things such as turning the other cheek (Matt. 5:38 2)
- 2- Loving enemies (Matt. 5:43),
- 3- Forgiving others as Christ forgave them (Matt. 6:14; 18:21-35)
- 4- Teaching others how to forgive as well (Matt. 28:18-20).

### **MOTIF 6: THE RETURN OF CHRIST**

Eschatology—the study of the events relating to the return of Christ and the end of history— has a deep impact on missionary theology and practice. We should not bother to fix social structures while people around us were going to hell. The world is only going to get worse before Christ returns.

As with the other motifs, eschatology relates to each of the three levels at the core of mission thinking.

- 1- First, evangelism is God's response to the fact that people apart from Christ are destined to spend eternity separated from God in hell.

We should take seriously both God's concern for humankind and the predicament of people separated from Christ.

2-Second, the certainty of Christ's return provides Christians with hope, enabling them to persevere in their own growth as followers of Christ.

3- It also spurs the church on, providing security in the knowledge that it is the bride of Christ and that the wedding awaits.

4- It also motivates Christians to expose the world's darkness. The agony of those who will enter a Christ-less eternity moves Christians, with Paul, to urge people to respond to Jesus's call and be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18).

3- Third, the coming of Christ motivates Christians to be preservers in a lost world.

In summary, we define the mission of the church centrally in terms of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; cf. Luke 24:47; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) and the priestly purpose of the church in the world.

As "priests of God" (see Rev 1:6), the mission of the members of the body of Christ is mediatorial in nature. Mediators serve with one overall purpose: reconciliation between two estranged parties.

### **Three phases in exercising a mediatorial role:**

1- The first phase is bearing witness that reconciliation is possible (Acts 1:8). It is the privilege of Christians to be used of God as instruments in effecting the actual reconciliation wrought by Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

2- The second phase is that of building up those who have entered God's kingdom through discipleship and appropriate enfoldings in local groups of believers collectively known as the church. These local bodies are where people are nurtured, strengthened, and encouraged, and are the places from which they are thrust out into the harvest field to continue with the first phase of the missionary task.

3- The third phase is that of living lives that shine light into dark places, acting as preservatives in the world to bring about the healing of hearts, minds, souls, and bodies.

### **Conclusion:**

The mission of the church is that it be used by God for four main purposes:

(1) to witness to people about the reconciliation

offered in Christ;

(2) to invite people to worship their creator by leading them to Christ;

(3) to incorporate those led to Christ into local  
Churches

(4) to teach them, as people reconciled to God, to obey all that Christ commanded  
in being salt and light in the world.

Evangelism is to be given a priority in the total mission of the church. Mission  
that does not include evangelism is missing the core.

God's desire is that Christians not separate these elements of mission as they  
pursue the path of reflecting his glory to a world estranged from its creator.