

The Cause & Purpose of Missions Missions & The Glory of God

Introduction:

- There are many worthy and notable motivations (from our human perspective) as to why people engage in missionary endeavors/activity.
- There are also many beneficial secondary causes to missionary endeavors (i.e. providing health care, improving the way of life, enhancing their education, developing language and literature, etc).
- Having a misguided cause or purpose will either lead to self-exaltation (pride) or discouragement/depression (a different form of pride).
- However, as lovers of Christ, there can only be one essential “end” for all missionary endeavors.
- God has specifically prescribed what is the “fuel and fire” for missions – the exaltation of His glory & name!

Body:

1. The Reality of Sin and the Glory of God – Isaiah 42:8

- God has always been; He has “existed” since eternity past and will continue to exist for eternity future. He has never known any deficiency, and He has always been glorified. He did not create humanity because He lacked glory, for He lacks nothing! There has never been a time when God has not been supremely glorified. This will never change.
- Not only is He supremely glorious, but He is so unparalleled that nothing can “share His glory.” This is a crucial reality, for if God could “share His glory” then there would be two supreme beings. This would directly go against the clear teaching of Scripture that states that there are “no god’s beside Me.”

A. Satan thought that he could share in God’s glory – Isaiah 14:12-14

- As a created being, beautiful as He was, he began to believe that he could share in God’s glory; that he could be like God. Obviously, Satan severely underestimated the supremacy of God in all things. Underestimating His power, His knowledge, His might, His authority, His sovereignty, Satan simply failed to recognize Jehovah as God and God alone. Therefore, he thought that he could rival God for His glory.

B. Nothing will ever rival God – Isaiah 14:15-17

- God swiftly and decisively dismissed Satan’s attempt to share in His glory. God’s most beautiful created creature was cast down (Ezekiel 28:12-14) and would forever remain the enemy of God. Satan thought that he was able to “do battle” with the Almighty. He miserably miscalculated, as he neglected to remember that Jehovah created him and alone is worthy of glory.

- C. Following in Satan's footsteps, humanity refuses to give God the glory He deserves. - **Romans 3:23**
- o In God's wisdom and mercy, He cast Satan out of heaven and allows him to "rule" on the earth. The reality of sin was seen in the Garden of Eden and has continued throughout every culture and generation till the present day. And so, just as Satan refused to give God the glory, we do the same.
 - o Romans 3:23 uses the word, ὑστερέω, which literally means to "lack giving God the glory" or to "fail to give God the glory." We have not attempted to give God glory; we have refused to give Him glory, just as Satan refused to give God glory and even attempted to rob Him of it.
- Until Satan rebelled against God, thinking that he could take part in God's glory, nothing attempted to contend for God's glory. In all reality, nothing can even remotely rival God's infinite glory and worth. God jealously guards His glory and refuses to share it with anything. Any attempt to "rob God" of His glory will not succeed. God wins; He always wins.

2. The Reality that God will be Glorified - Isaiah 48:9-11

- God's glory cannot be shared as seen above, but also God will be worshiped. He will receive glory. This reality is not dependent upon humanity or any aspect of His creation. The point is clear and simple, God will be supremely glorified. Case closed.
- Isaiah 48 is a clear text that points to the necessity of God receiving glory. Six times in three verses (vs. 9-11) we see God operating for the sake of His name and praise. This passage climaxes with the statement, "My glory, I will not give to another." Clearly, God is all about God.
- Is it wrong for God to be all about God? Surely, the answer must be no because nothing could ever be "wrong" with God. Yet, how is this true. How is it right for God to be all about Himself? If I was all about myself, would this not be a great sin? However, there is no greater being, creature, object, or thing that is greater or more worthy than God. Therefore God can rightly say, "You shall have no other God's before Me." This is perfectly logical for nothing is greater than God, so He is first. This is also true for God. God cannot have any other God's before Himself, for He is the greatest. So, God must be all about God. God is all about His glory, His exaltation, His praise, and His honor. This is surely true of God and it should be true of us as well.
- Therefore, the following points are true. God will be glorified in these ways:
 - A. The whole earth will know His glory - **Psalm 72:19, Isaiah 6:3**
 - o His glory is clearly seen in what He has made and what He currently does. However, because men refuse to acknowledge Him as God (Romans 1), they do not currently see the visible manifestations of His

glory. However, the day will come when the whole earth will be unmistakably full of His glory.

- B. Every human being will one day glorify Him - **Philippians 2:10-11**
 - o God in His grace has provided a way for men to be reconciled to Himself, through the person and work of Christ. As we will see later on, He is drawing men to Himself from all over the world. Those who respond in repentance and faith will know the joy of worshiping Him and glorifying His name now. However, there are many who reject the message of reconciliation and hope. They reject the Savior thinking that God is not worthy of being glorified. That God is not who He claims to be; they believe the same thing Satan believed, that they don't need God and are even equal to Him (as they demonstrate by making themselves their own gods). Those who refuse to worship God upon this earth will one day bow before the exalted Christ. At that moment all men will know that He is God alone and worthy of all glory and exaltation.

- C. God will have worshipers from every nation - **Psalms 86:9, Psalm 117:1, Revelation 5:9**
 - o In God's amazing sovereignty, He has called out for Himself a people from every nation who will glorify His name. Regardless of governments or religious oppression, God has called out for Himself people from all nations!
 - o This reality provides amazing assurance to global missions; we can go with the confidence that God has a people for Himself in every nation, every people! We must not wonder if God will save; we know that He will. He has people all over the world that He is going to draw to Himself.
 - o Why would God do this? Why does it matter to have people from every nation? Because God will be glorified in every place! God delights in His name being spread (Isaiah 45:22). That is what is so significant. He is glorious; He demands glory; those who worship Him give Him glory. Therefore, He is going to bring to Himself worshipers from every nation so that He will be supremely glorified in all places!

- D. Regardless of what we do, He will be glorified - **Romans 11:36**
 - o God is able, because He is God, to glorify His name through any and all circumstances. Surely, He desires to be glorified by those who love, adore, honor, and cherish Him. When creatures with a will choose to ascribe glory to God, He is pleased. However, as we fail to ascribe glory to God by our sinful lives, God is able to bring His name glory in the end. He may be glorified by manifesting His grace in forgiveness, and He may be glorified by judging sin, yet He will receive the glory.

- o We are left with a decision. God will be glorified, one way or the other. He will be exalted! Nothing is going to stop the infinite and glorious God of the universe from receiving the glory that He demands and deserves. This is where the choice comes in, we can either get on board with what God is doing in the world and live for His glory and name now or we can set up our own “gods” and in the end give God the glory because we will be able to do nothing else? God in His mercy has allowed us to choose to glorify Him now. By the grace that is provided in Christ, we are able to live for His glory today. However, those who refuse to glorify Him now and one day will bow before Him because they cannot do anything else, will not be bowing before their loving Savior, they will be bowing before their Righteous Judge.

3. The Purpose of God in the World - His own Exaltation

- A. To bring glory to His name by choosing Israel - Ezekiel 20:8-9, 13-14, Jeremiah 13:11
- B. To bring glory to His name by saving His people (*Israel*) - Psalm 79:9, Psalm 106:8, Ezekiel 36:22-23
- C. To bring glory to His name by being worshiped Alone - Isaiah 42:8
- D. To bring glory to His name by leading His children - Psalm 23:3
- E. To bring glory to His name by sending Christ - John 13:31, John 17:1
- F. To bring glory to His name by forgiving sin - **Isaiah 43:25, Psalm 25:11, John 12:27-28**
 - o Even the Old Testament God’s saving grace is clearly seen. John MacArthur notes that Isaiah 43:25 “may be the high point of grace in the entire Old Testament.” However, we must notice why He “blots out transgressions.” It is for His own name sake (i.e. for His glory).
 - o David clearly indicates that the forgiveness of sin that he is seeking after will be done for the sake of His name. Interesting that his plea is not based on how much he loves God or how much God loved David. It was not about David at all; it was all about God’s glory & exaltation.
 - o Even amidst the turmoil of the cross, Christ had one single focus, that God’s name would be glorified. Notice, Christ here does not focus upon his love for sinners or His desire to save sinners. These are all secondary motivations. His chief motivation or end is to bring glory to His Father’s name!
 - o This does not minimize the reality that God loves sinners, for truly He does (John 3:16 should not be dismissed or explained away). However, God’s love for sinners is not the ultimate motivation for what He does!
- G. To bring glory to His name by electing sinners - **Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14**

- o “To the praise of His glory,” could Paul be any more specific regarding the motivation behind sovereign grace?
- o This choosing of sinners for His glory was done “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). God knew before He created humanity that they would rebel, but He knew that through their rebellion He would be glorified in the reconciliation of sinners.
- o It is essential to notice that God has not saved us because of anything in us or even for us. Rescuing us from hell is not the ultimate reason for redemption. Saving fallen humanity from punishment is not the ultimate reason for redemption. *The ultimate & most glorious purpose in God choosing to save sinners is the glory of God.*

H. To bring glory to His name by punishing sin – **Romans 9:22-23**

- o This reality is only hard for us to understand because we are not **God**. A thorough study of the nature of God, especially His sovereign rule over all things, will cause us to quickly realize that God is able to do whatever He desires and wills. There is none like Him, therefore, none can question Him.
- o Vessels of wrath = those whom God has not chosen to be His children, who reject the gospel and live hostilely towards God. God endures them, even though He could justly wipe them out immediately and not allow them to endure in their total rejection of God.
- o MacArthur – “No one is treated unfairly: Some receive the justice they earn and deserve, others graciously receive mercy.” Truly, God is glorified in His gracious mercy! He is not obligated to show mercy, but He has chosen to show mercy so that some might worship Him!
- o However the key statement in this passage is the motivation on God’s part. He wants to display the “riches of His glory” to those who have been redeemed! It is all for His glory! It is all about God! This should be wonderfully comforting! God does not exist for you; He exists for something much greater, something infinitely greater, and that is His own glory and name sake!

Question: How does God’s agenda to exalt His own glory and name in the world affect us?

- o It is why He left us here!
 - o To live for His glory & exaltation – **1 Corinthians 10:31**
 - By worshiping Him alone. Our lives should prove to the world that God is God alone, because we worship in all things.
 - By loving Him supremely the world should see something radical, something life consuming, something entirely unique! The world should behold your love for Christ and be amazed at how intimately you love your Savior.
 - By living for Him the world should see that Christ is more than a historic figure of religious fanatics. They should see Christ as the

Son of God, glorious Redeemer, and Friend of Sinners. Our lives must be a testimony to Christ, so that He will receive the glory that He deserves.

- o To proclaim His glory & gospel to the world – **Romans 10:14, Matthew 28:19, 1 Peter 2:9**
 - By proclaiming that “there is none like You.” The message of our society is entirely pluralistic. Truth is purely relative. Yet, Christ is the “I AM.” Over and over we see the phrase “there is none like me.” Clearly, Jehovah God is not pluralistic or relativistic. He is God alone and our lives should testify that He is entirely unique and God alone.
 - By living the gospel each day we glorify Christ. By each day rejoicing in His grace that is found only at the cross we honor Him. Each day of our lives should be full of wonderful and rich contemplations of the substitutionary death of Christ on your behalf. These thoughts will move you to humility, worship, adoration, and the exaltation of Christ.
 - By consciously making disciples of Christ! Christ is supremely glorified by sinners repenting and worshiping Him. This is discipleship. Discipleship is not a method or steps that you have to take; discipleship is simply the process of regeneration followed by sanctification. In God’s gracious providence He allows us to take part in discipling others for His glory and name sake.
 - By giving so that others may “make disciples of all nations.” You may not be able to “go to all nations,” but God has enabled us all to be able to give abundantly so that others are able to go. One can talk all day about wanting to glorify Christ, but if they are unwilling to give abundantly so that Christ may be glorified amongst the nations, they are not truly committed to Christ and His glory. “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Prove by your generous giving that the exaltation of Jesus among the nations is your greatest priority, as it is His greatest priority!
 - By “going so that others may worship.” The question is simply, would I be willing to go so that others will worship? God has left us here to glorify His name. Yet, some would be unwilling to glorify His name among the heathens, especially if that means leaving the comforts of this life behind. May we be a people that are eager and willing to leave comforts behind for the sake of the gospel and the glory of His name!

o **Question:** Will you get on board with what God is doing in the world to exalt His own glory and name?

Conclusion:

- The Word of God is clear; God will be glorified. Regardless of us, He will receive glory. His very nature demands it. We are left then with the question of getting on board with God's glory and exaltation or living for our own pathetic self-exaltation. As Satan who thought He was God's equal, we often fall to the same miserable lie. May we get on board with God's glory and exaltation in the world, and as God is, be all about God.