

**Romans 15:20-21:** I make it my ambition to preach the Gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, <sup>21</sup> but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."

**Intro: Our Church's Mission Statement: Matthew 28:18-20:** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Nations/People Groups = same culture/language)

**George Murray, All Nations Family:** Out of the 7 billion people in the world, 2 billion have never even heard the name of Jesus. Only 5% of the people that get Biblical training plan on going into missions. Of those 5%, only 9.6% go to the unreached people groups and they receive only 1% of the church's money.

**David Platt:** North American Christians give an average of 2.5% of their income to churches. Churches give an average of 2% to missions. So for every \$100 a North American Christian makes, 5 cents is given to missions.

**What does it mean to be unreached:** Not only have they never heard the Gospel. They don't have access to the Gospel. (2 Billion people, 6,000 people groups) – There's no church witness there!

**S. Lawson:** Hell is a real place with real fire that inflicts real torment upon real unbelievers. Avoid it at all costs.

**Somalia: *Killing Christians* (Tom Doyle):** Azzam was a Muslim living in Somalia, and his dad was a Muslim warlord. So when Azzam became a Christian, his life was in great danger because those who convert from Islam to Christianity are put to death. Azzam's mother, because she loved him, told him to run away from home so her husband (Azzam's father) would not be able to kill him. Azzam ran away from home and began risking his life by smuggling Bibles into Somalia from Kenya. He would do this smuggling by hiding with the Bibles under decaying corpses in caskets, since dead bodies are unclean to Muslim men, they would not open the caskets.

Sadly, one day Azzam received a package from his dad: the package contained the cut up body parts of his mother. Azzam assumed that his father had her killed because she urged him to escape. "As if to emphasize the unfeeling execution, a photograph had been laid atop the bag of human remains. It showed his mother kneeling in front of two men Azzam recognized, their knives raised over the tearful woman. "So, Mahdi and Yasin had been the designated killers. They had done their jobs well." Across the bottom of the photo in his father's handwriting was a message for Azzam: "If you try to bury your mother in Somalia, we will dig her up and feed her to dogs." The next day, Azzam carted his mother's body to the coast and buried her at sea.

One day Azzam met the men who killed his mother on the streets of Somalia: "I know what you did to my mother. I haven't come to harm you. I've come to forgive you. You need to know that I love you & have prayed for both of you ever since I saw your picture with my mother. Jesus filled my heart with compassion for you. You need Him – just like I did. He can forgive murderers. His love is greater than anything you've done." "It was the first meeting between the three men. They met again – at night – several more times. Impelled by Azzam's testimony, Mahdi & Yasin offered their lives of piracy to a forgiving Savior." Mahdi later said, "In my religion, there was no certainty of forgiveness – either from God or each other. When Yasin & I saw Azzam on the road last week, I reached for my knife, assuming I would need to defend myself. There would be no reason for him to confront us other than to avenge his mother's death & kill us both to honor her. But when Azzam spoke, his words paralyzed both of us. We could not believe what we were hearing. His words of forgiveness, I had never heard anything like it, I have longed for words like this often during my life. For Azzam to forgive murderers like us and to tell us that he loves us, is, unbelievable." Yasin picked up the story. "For the last week, all three of us have been meeting at night. Azzam has shown us that Jesus can forgive the worst of sinners. Moses killed a man, and Paul ordered people to their deaths. But they, too, were forgiven & redirected, Jesus has even forgiven us for being pirates. Stealing & killing was our way of life. Only Jesus could forgive us, & only Jesus could give Azzam the heart to forgive us."

Azzam also found out from his mother's killers that as they killed her, her last words were: "Jesus, Jesus, I love You." She had become a Christian too. That's why his father had her put to death, not because she allowed him to escape, but because she too had converted from Islam to Christ. Azzam continues his work to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the underground church in Somalia. He writes: "I have been a believer now for fifteen years. When I married, my wife knew we would not have a normal life. She told me, "Azzam, we will live in danger until the day we die as martyrs for Christ, but I will walk this journey with you joyfully." Die as martyrs for Christ! What a fearless woman of God! . . . Remember us here in Somalia in your prayers. We send our love in Christ."

**Purpose of the book of Romans:** God's Gospel concerning His Son Jesus Christ, Who died for our sins and rose again from the dead, promised in the Scriptures, revealing the righteousness of God to be received by faith alone which brings about the obedience of faith **among all nations** for the glory of the eternal and only wise God.

### **1. Paul's Ambition Was To Preach The Gospel**

**Romans 15:20:** I make it my ambition to preach the Gospel

**a. What is an ambition: Dictionary:** A strong desire to do or to achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work.

**John Piper:** Do you have a holy ambition? Not everyone should have Paul's ambition. One plants and another waters (1 Corinthians 3:6-8). Each has his own gift (1 Corinthians 7:7). Each stands or falls before his own master (Romans 14:4). But I think God would be pleased if each of his children had a holy ambition.

For Girls and Boys: Little children, listen to me carefully for a moment. I know the words, "holy ambition," are unusual and you don't use them every day. "Holy ambition" means something you really want to do that God wants you to do. Something you want to do so much that doing it keeps you from doing other things that you also really like to do. Paul really wanted to go to Rome for years. But he didn't go because he wanted something more. He wanted to preach the gospel in Asia and Greece where people didn't know about Jesus. He really, really, really wanted to do this. We call that kind of desire an "ambition." And we call it "holy ambition" when it is something God wants you to do.

Do you have one? Probably not yet. You're only a child. That's what you're supposed to be. But some day you won't be a child any more. And one of the differences between being a child and growing up is that growing up as a Christian means you get a holy ambition. Most little girls . . . really want to have and play with dolls. That's a good thing. But the day is going to come, little girls, when you will put away the fun of playing with dolls and grow up into the even bigger, better joy of caring for real babies in the nursery [or your own!]. And maybe you will even lead a ministry someday of caring for hungry babies far away, or lonely babies who have no mommy or daddy. & for some of you this will become a holy ambition. For others your holy ambition will be something else.

And boys, listen. If you are like I was, what you really want is a ball, a truck, and gun and somebody to play with. I've never had a real gun (except a pellet rifle). But I shot a lot of bad guys with my Matt Dillon pistol and my Lukas McCain-like, circle-handled rifle. I loved playing football with my friends and digging roads across the street for my trucks and drawing my pistol so fast you couldn't see it. It was fun. And that was good.

But some day you won't be a little boy any more. And one of the differences between being a little boy and growing up is that growing up as a Christian means you get a holy ambition. And that means the fun of guns and trucks and balls gets small and the joy of fighting for justice and salvation gets big. Growing up means getting a holy ambition to wield the sword of the Spirit mightily and drive a truckload of love to the needy and kick Satan's rear end in the name of Jesus. Mom and Dad, single people, young and old, Christians should have a holy ambition. Something you really, really want to do for the glory of God. Something that controls you. [Like Paul], It helps you decide not to go to Rome yet. It gives eternal focus and passion to your life. (Pray for an ambition!)

**b. What is the Gospel? 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:** Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, & by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you - unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures

## **GOSPEL: The Good News: 1) God; 2) Man; 3) Christ; 4) Response**

**c. This Gospel must be preached: Romans 10:13-15:** For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." <sup>14</sup> But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? <sup>15</sup> And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

**1 John 2:23:** No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

**1 John 5:12:** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

**John 14:6:** Jesus said to him "I am the way, & the truth, & the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**Acts 4:12:** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

**John 3:18:** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

**Carl F. H. Henry:** The Gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.

## **2. Paul's Ambition Was To Preach The Gospel Where Christ Had Not Yet Been Named**

**Romans 15:20-21:** I make it my ambition to preach the Gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, <sup>21</sup> but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."

**Rom. 15:19:** from Jerusalem & all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ

**Isaiah 52:15:** for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

**Moo:** By "where Christ has not been named," Paul means places where there is no worship of Christ at all. Paul here indicates that he believed that God had given him the ministry of establishing strategic churches in **virgin gospel territory**; like the early American pioneers who pulled up stakes anytime they could see the smoke from another person's cabin, Paul felt "crowded" by too many Christians.

- Everyone is not a missionary! (Missionaries cross cultural, geographic, and language barriers)
- Everyone should live like a missionary and be an evangelist!

Know; Pray; Give; Prepare; Go; Look unto Jesus – the greatest missionary Who has ever lived!

Christ Jesus Is The Sure Foundation  
God And Man The Incarnation  
Built To Last And Bring Salvation  
Those Not Hearing Burn Damnation  
Billions Miss His Praise Elation  
Our Ambition And Fixation  
Must Be To Tell With Celebration  
His Good News To Every Nation  
Christ Has Died Propitiation

Rose Alive Justification  
New Hearts He Gives Regeneration  
By Faith Alone Reconciliation  
Fight Faith's Fight Sanctification  
Be With Him Glorification  
Go And Tell The Whole Creation  
Of Christ's Love Humiliation  
For His Praise And Exaltation!  
That's my King!