

Missions Emphasis
For the week of 10/15/23

Reflection

1. What were some of the takeaways, for you, from Sunday's sermon?

2. Were there questions, comments, concerns...?

Note: This is a study of missions utilizing different Scriptures for group discussions.

In the Bible, God reveals:

- His love for lost people
- His passion to bring these people back into fellowship with Himself
- His desire to use our lives to fulfill that purpose
- The reality of the sacrifices involved for all three¹

2 Corinthians 5:11–21

In this passage Paul describes our motive for witness in the world by remembering the work that Christ has done and the ministry that he has given us. We now serve as Christ's ambassadors. The Corinthian readers, many of whom were slaves or impoverished, had to go through a paradigm shift to think of themselves as ambassadors. From their perspective an ambassador spoke on behalf of the Roman emperor, delivering his message to the people. An ambassador therefore carried great authority and great responsibility.

God could have communicated his love to the world through any means he desired. For reasons that are unfathomable to us, he chooses to do his work through us. We are his method. We serve as his ambassadors communicating the message of reconciliation through Jesus Christ to the world.

3. What images from daily life, history, or the Bible does the word **reconciliation** bring to mind?

¹ Paul Borthwick, [*Missions: God's Heart for the World: 9 Studies for Individuals or Groups: With Notes for Leaders*](#), A LifeGuide Bible Study (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2000), 5.

8. What do you see as your role and your responsibility as an “ambassador” for Christ?⁵

Philippians 2:1–11

Our culture tells us to respond to a challenge with the comeback “What’s in this for me?” Yet outreach, missions and service involve communicating God’s love to our world in ways that will inevitably involve our loss of comfort and sacrifice of our personal rights. Where do we find the sustained motivation for such giving?⁶

Paul wrote the book of Philippians while in some sort of captivity, either prison or, more likely, a type of house arrest that had him chained to a Roman soldier twenty-four hours a day. From this context he wrote the letter to the church at Philippi, which we have in four chapters. The letter is characterized by the word *joy*, which provokes readers to ask, “How could Paul find joy in the midst of such difficult circumstances?”⁷

9. What do verses 1–5 reveal about Paul’s purpose in setting Jesus forth as our example? (Read Philippians 4:2–3 as well.)⁸

⁵ Paul Borthwick, [*Missions: God’s Heart for the World: 9 Studies for Individuals or Groups: With Notes for Leaders*](#), A LifeGuide Bible Study (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2000), 26.

⁶ Paul Borthwick, [*Missions: God’s Heart for the World: 9 Studies for Individuals or Groups: With Notes for Leaders*](#), A LifeGuide Bible Study (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2000), 28.

⁷ Paul Borthwick, [*Missions: God’s Heart for the World: 9 Studies for Individuals or Groups: With Notes for Leaders*](#), A LifeGuide Bible Study (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2000), 28.

⁸ Paul Borthwick, [*Missions: God’s Heart for the World: 9 Studies for Individuals or Groups: With Notes for Leaders*](#), A LifeGuide Bible Study (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2000), 29.

10. What did Jesus need to release in order to come to earth to serve humanity (vv. 6–8)?⁹

11. How do you think the phrase “made Himself nothing” (v. 7) applies to our serving others?¹⁰

Matthew 28:18-20
The Great Commission

12. Read this passage as a group. What does this passage mean for all believers? RiverLakes Church? You individually?

⁹ Paul Borthwick, [*Missions: God’s Heart for the World: 9 Studies for Individuals or Groups: With Notes for Leaders*](#), A LifeGuide Bible Study (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2000), 29.

¹⁰ Paul Borthwick, [*Missions: God’s Heart for the World: 9 Studies for Individuals or Groups: With Notes for Leaders*](#), A LifeGuide Bible Study (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2000), 30.