

Beautiful Feet

Our World

Revelation 5:9, 7:9

January 26, 2020 am

HDBC

This morning I am going to wrap up my part of this series called ***Beautiful Feet***. Claudia Brown will speak next week as we complete this focus. The title comes from the words of Paul written in Romans 10:15. ***How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things.***

I've chosen this series for these early days in 2020 to refocus our hearts and minds on the primacy of missions and evangelism. These things were so important to Jesus that many of the last conversations that He had with the early disciples centered on them. All four gospels offer examples of this. The book of Acts begins with a reminder of the urgency of our mission.

Because we have a tendency to drift away from important things, from time to time, we need to be reminded, refocused & re-challenged. That's what this series has been about. Called to walk across the room or the street, drive across our city or county, and fly across the world. Today our focus is on reaching our world. As we think of the world, I want to point out that the New Testament uses a number of words to describe our world.

Four of those are found in a couple of verses in the last book of the Bible, The Revelation. These two passages are like bookends as we consider the mission of Christ. The first offers insight into the purpose of His mission and the second reflects the success of His mission. Let's look at the first in Revelation 5:9.

1. The Purpose of the Mission of Christ (Rev. 5:9)

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. Rev 5:9

Some context will be helpful. This entire book is a series of visions that John the apostle received from the Lord while exiled on the island of Patmos. In this vision John saw the resurrected Jesus approaching the throne of His

father and taking a scroll with seven seals. This scroll represents the title deed to creation. Christ was the only one found worthy to take the deed and open its seals, for He purchased its redemption with his death and resurrection. No time today to go into detail about that.

As he took the book a great worship celebration broke out around the throne of God. Angels worshipped him. Saved people in Heaven join in the worship. Notice what they sang,

You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Here we are reminded of the purpose of Christ's mission. He came to die that he might **purchase or redeem** people from every part of this world.

Purchased – Rich NT word for redemption that pictures slaves purchased in the marketplace and then set free. That's what Jesus did at the cross. He came and died for a very specific purpose. To save people.

Four words are used to describe the people who were purchased.

Tribe - A social division of people based on lineage. Descendants. People related by common ancestry. Ideas of *kindred or clan*. Genetic relationship.

Tongue - A distinct people group associated by common language. May differ in other areas, but have a common language. Central America.

People - Group of people connected together by cultural, physical and geographical features. Could refer to people simply living in close proximity to each other, like nations.

Nation - *Ethnos*. Our word **ethnic** comes from this word. We speak of *ethnic groups*. Group united by kinship, culture and common interests.

These four words are used to emphasize the totality of Christ's mission. He came to reach every kind of person. None are left out. Comprehensive nature of his mission. God loves all people.

It must have been thrilling for John to realize that ultimately there would be people from every ethnic group on the planet who would be saved. Every culture, every tribe, every people would be represented in Heaven. Heaven will be the example of diversity.

Note this, that in Heaven they are still distinctly who they were on earth. We don't supernaturally morph into one type of people in heaven. Some often speak of God as being color-blind. Not so. He sees the various ethnic groups and loves each one as they are. He created us as we are. Yet there will be perfect harmony and unity. This is what being "in Christ" is supposed to do in this life and will do in Heaven.

17,297 identified people groups on the earth. Christ came for the people in each of those groups! Not just Jews. Not just Americans. All people!

2. The Success of the Mission of Christ (Rev 7:9)

In another vision John sees a similar scene but there is a distinction. In the first the focus is on Christ, who purchased their salvation. The saved are pictured around the throne of the Father **because of** the work of the Son. That scene reminds us of why Christ came in the first place. His purpose was the redemption of people. Listen to John's description of this scene.

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; Rev 7:9

Same four words used to describe the variety of people around the throne. But this time there is no mention of the purchase of Christ's mission. No mention of his death. Here the focus is on the **success of the mission** for the entire focus is on the worship of those around the throne.

They are clothed in white robes, signifying their purity in Christ. They are righteous because of what He has done for them, and they respond in worship of Him. In 5:9 we are reminded of the death of Christ to purchase the saved. In 7:9 the focus is on the success of that mission as they worship.

What God determines to do, He does. His plans will succeed. He never fails. There will indeed be people from every tribe, tongue and nation around the throne and in Heaven for all eternity because of what Jesus has done.

But right now, as far as we know, this is not the case. Of the 17,297 people groups over 7,000 are unreached and many are unengaged. Many people have never even heard the name of Jesus, so how will they make it to Heaven? How will they be counted in this number that John saw?

There is one other passage that I want us to consider and it answers that question. It's Matthew 28:18-20. Great Commission! Third point is. . .

3. **Our Part in the Mission of Christ** (Matt. 28:18-20)

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Nations in this passage is the same word found in both Revelation verses. Jesus died that people from all nations can be saved. People from all nations will be saved. In between those two things, we are called to be instruments of that process. We are called to make disciples. We are called to go. We are called to send. It's our job!

It would be simplistic to try to restrict the purpose or mission of the church to one thing. We could say **worship**. We could say **glorify God**. We could say **reflect the kingdom of God on earth**. All of these are certainly part of the mission of the church. But in addition of those, we certainly must add **taking the gospel to the nations**. That is a task that will not end until Jesus comes.

We can't let up! We can't slow down. We must not be distracted. We must not be deterred. We must not fail to do all we can to reach our generation for Christ. We must seek to do our part to make sure that some from every tribe, tongue, nation and people currently living in our generation are around the throne.

Eddie Aikau was a Hawaiian surfer who is memorialized in the little phrase *Eddie would go!* You see it on bumper sticker and t-shirts. Aikau was a lifeguard and big-wave surfer on Oahu's North Shore. He was fearless and willing to tackle any wave regardless of the size. As a lifeguard he went out 500 times and lost no one!

During the spring of 1978, Eddie was a crewman on an ancient Hawaiian sailing vessel that was making its way toward Tahiti. Somewhere in the Hawaiian channel, in stormy seas and gale-force winds, the boat overturned, casting all onboard into the water.

After a night of the crew members futilely trying to attract passing boats and planes with flares, Eddie volunteered to paddle his surfboard, to get help. He realized that options were running out. Soon the prevailing currents would take them far out to sea and beyond the reasonable hope of rescue.

He was determined to go. He set off with a strobe light and a ring of oranges around his neck for what he estimated would be a twelve-mile paddle to the tiny island nearby. He was never seen again.

A passing boat later rescued the crew of the *Hokule'a*. Eddie's willingness to risk—even to sacrifice his life—has made him a legend to other watermen around the world. Men push other men to go farther, to risk more, with three simple words: "**Eddie would go!**"

If Eddie would go to save someone at risk of drowning, how convicting, if we don't go to save someone at risk of being lost for eternity.

Will you pray? Will you give? Will you send? Will you go?