"Why Bother?"

Acts 1:1-8

Missions Month, week 1

I. Welcome to missions month! I'm excited about the month of October and all that we have planned.

A. By the end of the month we will have heard from every missions organization we support – locally, nationally, and internationally.

B. We'll have had the pleasure of hosting several of our missionaries on Sunday morning as quests.

C. We will have spent the entire month focusing our minds and hearts on carrying the Gospel to the four corners of the earth and into our own homes.

1) Each week look for a brief synopsis in the bulletin about the mission we are highlighting during worship (Today was the BerlinProjekt).

2) Look for another ministry highlighted in the Chronicle each Sunday morning.

3) Look for e-mails during the week lifting up other ministries, a specific prayer focus for the day, and thoughts about sharing your faith with others.

D. And as we begin the month, let's start by asking a fundamental question about missions – "why bother?"

1) The US Center for World Mission estimates that of the more than 6 billion people in the world:

a) 33% are Christians.

b) 40% are reached/evangelized non-Christians, and

c) 27% are unreached/unevagelized non-Christians.

2) You could make the argument, and many are that the job's pretty much done.

a) Existing missionaries will shrink the 27% as time goes on and soon we will have reached the whole world.

b) Our job will then be done.

3) I couldn't disagree more!

a) Let's assume the 27% becomes 0% and they all become Christian believers.

b) Do you still see a problem?

i. That would mean that 60% of the world know Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives, but

ii. That still leaves 40% who don't.

c) The only time the church can rest on its laurels is when the entire world proclaims Jesus Christ as Lord.

4) We're not done when the preaching's done.

a) We're done when the world has heard, been baptized, and discipled!

b) Here are four reasons why we need to keep on sharing – in our neighborhoods and around the world.

i. Because.

ii. Because we can.

iii. Why not.

iv. Okay.

II. Because! Jesus commanded us to.
   A. Pretty straightforward, but often overlooked is the power of a command from the Master.
      1) Note the imperative tone in verse 8: "And *you will be* my witnesses …"
      2) This isn't presented as extra credit. This is core curriculum!
   B. Jesus presents this in such a way that we can't get around it.
      1) This is what followers of Jesus do.
      2) This most basic level still rings true: Jesus said so.
   C. But for those of you like me who still need more convincing, there are other reasons beside this one.
III. Because we can! The Holy Spirit gives us the power to do it.
   A. Look at verse 8 with me again.
      1) "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will be my witnesses …"
      2) This will happen and then this will happen.
         a) This is simply cause and effect.
         b) It's an if/then statement.
            i. IF: the Holy Spirit will come upon you.
            ii. THEN: you will be my witnesses.
   B. Let me ask you this: "Has the Holy Spirit come upon you?"
      1) If you are a follower of Jesus the answer to that question is yes.
      2) So if the "if" is true, then the "then" is also true. And then the "then" will be easy if the "if" has already happened.
      3) Let's try that again:
         a) If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then the Holy Spirit has come upon you.
         b) If the Holy Spirit has come upon you, then you will be God's witnesses.
   C. How can it be that simple?
      1) Because God never gives us a task to perform in His name that he doesn't also give us the power to complete it.
      2) He wants us to be his witnesses so his gives us the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can't miss!
   D. Suddenly, all of our fears and objections seem to fade into the background. Our hesitancy disappears.
      1) Because we know that we've been given the power to be witnesses.
      2) And we just have to let the power through.
IV. Why not! We can't not do it. We are compelled to do it!
   A. I don't know about you but its hard for me to put my feelings toward God into words.
      1) My life is far from perfect. But I feel more alive than I would ever expect to feel without Him.
      2) I love the sense of the supernatural, the sense that something awesome is happening all around me. I give God the credit for that.
      3) It's not just that He has changed my life, but that He's changed so much about this world that just gets me jazzed.
   B. And I want everyone to feel and understand that for themselves.
      1) I share my faith because I just can't help it!
      2) It just comes spilling out!
      3) "The joy of the Lord is my strength!"
V. Okay! We have an "attitude of gratitude."

A. What do you think would be the best way to show your gratitude to God for your salvation?
    1) Hide it under a bushel? No. Let it shine.
    2) Bury it in the sand? No. Invest it.
    3) Keep it to yourself? No. Tell someone.
B. Our motivation is not obligation, but gratitude.
C. The Bible says, “And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” 2 Corinthians 9:14-15.

VI. That’s why I believe the ultimate test of whether or not you are a disciple of Jesus Christ is if you’ve made one.
A. Ask yourself …
    1) Have I shared this message of love out of the gratitude of my heart?
    2) Have I shared it because I just can’t seem to help myself?
    3) Do I know that God has given me power for that specific purpose?
B. Jesus said go.
    1) And there’s a lot of folk who need some joy; a lot of folk who are waiting for it to come spilling out of you.
    2) He sent his spirit to give you the words to say and to cover your mistakes.
    3) He doesn’t want even one person to live their lives without feeling his love and goodness.
C. That’s why we bother.