

The Gospel Is For All

A beautiful song in our collection bears the title above. It is a joy to sing the chorus, which says, "The blessed gospel is for all, the gospel if for all. Where sin has gone must go His grace, the gospel is for all." One of the fundamental works of the church is sending out missionaries to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. Jesus charged the apostles as the church was beginning, "and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8b). This can be directly connected to His instructions in Mark 16:15 where Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

As the church began to gel in Jerusalem, a persecution arose against her from the Jews. In Acts 8:4 we read that the Christians were scattered abroad because of this persecution. But rather than remain silent about the gospel of Jesus Christ, they broadcast the news of salvation in Jesus Christ to every place they went. In Acts 8 Phillip preaches in the city of Samaria and in the wilderness. In Acts 10 we see Peter in the city of Joppa, but then he goes to Caesarea to preach to Cornelius and his family.

In Acts 11:19-20 Luke tells about how that after the persecution of Stephen, the Christians went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch and even Cyrene.

After spending a year in Antioch Paul and Barnabas were called by the Holy Spirit for a particular work. "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to

which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:2-3).

John wrote about helping missionaries on their way in 3 John 5-8. In verses 7 and 8 he says, "because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth." Paul said to the church at Philippi that supporting mission work was a sweet smelling savor to God and it was also counted as fruit to their account (Philippians 4:17-18).

From these examples of missionaries and mission work in the early church, and from the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is necessary to conclude that mission work is an essential work of the church. An established congregation that is not involved in spreading the gospel is not fulfilling her mandate from Christ. Here at Forest Park there are many wonderful mission works that are going on. We have the local outreach work in our community. This is being accomplished through the House to House/Heart to Heart paper that is mailed out to about 12,000 homes in our area bimonthly. Members are also reaching out to friends, co-workers, strangers and family inviting them to take the Bible Correspondence Course, or for personal Bible Studies, or to come to worship with us. Our Sunday Night for the Savior program is reaching out to our visitors with cards, phone calls and personal visits.

With one-time support we have helped works in Russia, South America and Australia. One-time support is also given to the many short term missionaries that go out from Forest Park to labor in various fields.

Regular support is given from the church and individuals to Rocco and Debbie Peirce in American Samoa, Scott and Rebecca Shanahan in Pohnpei, David and Loyce Smith in Majuro, Demar, Dixie and John Elam in the Philippines, Guyana and other places.

There is also the four families that we oversee: Robert, Mary and Maria Martin, Randy and Sharon English and their family, Stacy and Kathy Ferguson and their family, and Joey and Tammy Treat and their family. These four families, as well as others we support are serving with honor and are laboring diligently. By your support you are gathering fruit that abounds to your account. Our Father in heaven is also glorified by these sacrifices.

Mission work is an ongoing mandate. We must never grow content nor may we even entertain the thought that we have completed our part in the mission to carry the gospel to the world. This mission will continue until Jesus comes again. Jesus said that we should pray for laborers to bring in the harvest. Let us continue supporting and encouraging our missionaries. And let us do our part to bring in the harvest. It is a sweet aroma to God.