**Following Jesus … Into where He is Unknown**

**(Luke 15:8-10)**

**Sam Dharam**

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbours together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15: 8-10 New King James Version)

Introduction

It is not possible for Christians to not be in missions. From the moment you profess faith to the living God, you automatically sign up into missions. We are to think that wherever there are those who do not yet know Jesus, that is our mission field.

To have a start on the field, what it takes is to ask someone *“What’s your story?”* Sam gave us a few real life examples. *\* Their names have been changed for privacy.*



***Story 1***: Ramu\* was a downtown beggar in India. When asked *“What’s your story?”* Ramu told his story of being kidnapped as a child, had his limbs chopped off and whatever his captors did not chop, was twisted so that it cannot be used for meaningful labour. He asked to meet his father again to feel his physical embrace again and if the interviewer could take him to see his father.

***Story 2***: Leela\* was a lady from middle class background, a husband and two children placed in premium schools. When asked *“What’s your story?”* she initially said everything was good in life. But something in her voice said there was more to her story. When pressed she told that home life was a nightmare when her husband comes home at night as he would be drunk and will beat her up. The domestic violence by the hands of the husband left Leela with black and blue marks all over her body. She had gone from temple to temple, guru to guru to no solution to her hell on earth. She concluded that there is no god with the power to change her husband and was considering a family suicide pact to put an end to her family’s misery.

***Story 3***: Lakshmi\* was a prostitute in Mumbai. When asked *“What’s your story?”* she told of how she was kidnapped by 5 men and gang raped as a child, and was sold to a brothel in Mumbai after the week long ordeal. Her dream was to be married to a respectable family but it was crushed especially since she already had a child by one of her purchasers.

# God’s Broken Heart for the Lost

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, **and He was grieved in His heart**. (Genesis 6: 5-6 New King James Version)



There are two possible feelings we have when hearing these tragic stories:

1. We want to help but we are too far away to do so

2. We are upset by the wickedness of men

We human beings can put these aside from our minds and carry on. But God cannot, because man is the object of God’s passionate love. Each of us was fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139: 14), and God knew every single one of us before the foundation of the world was made (Jeremiah 1:5).

“Your words have been harsh against Me,” says the Lord, “Yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?’  You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the Lord of hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free.’” (Malachi 3: 13-15 New King James Version)

God is grieved because man, the crown of His creation, opposes and continues to oppose God by hating Him. Even as a human parent, you would be devastated if your child would come up to you and say “*I wish I was never born*” or “*I wish you were not my father / mother*”. If we who are evil would feel this pain, what more about God?

Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord: “What injustice have your fathers found in Me, that they have gone far from Me, have followed idols, and have become idolaters?” (Jeremiah 2: 4-5 New King James Version)



Going back to Luke 15: 10, “Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” It is not about a scoreboard. The human soul is much more valuable than just another number. The angels rejoice because when one soul returns to the Father, His grieving Heart is comforted as His created son / daughter has returned to Him.

Mission work is not about the numbers or countries. It is about soothing the Heart of God.

# Passion for Souls

When there is no passion, we are dismissive especially of the down and outs. We are to remember that a soul is a precious and invaluable in God’s sight. In the parable of the wedding banquet, the King invites all to the table (Matthew 22: 1-14, Luke 15: 15-24). Every soul is worth reaching out to.

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul. (Matthew 16:26 New King James Version)

Why is the human soul invaluable?

1. A human soul is the breath of God.
2. A human soul is immortal: one either goes to Heaven or Hell, but all the wealth in the world cannot buy a single soul.
3. A human soul is made in His likeness and image.
4. A human soul is created for relationship with God.
5. A human soul is priceless and invaluable: spiritual warfare is waged constantly for each of our individual souls.
6. It required God’s death for each soul: weekend celebration is about the redeemed people celebrating what God has done for each of us who believe.

# Burden for Souls

How can we get this burden for souls?

1. We are to have a revelatory understanding of God.
2. We are to understand how valuable we are to God.
3. We are to have an understanding of where the soul goes.

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Hebrews 9: 27-28 New King James Version)



Sam related the testimony of a survivor of Titanic who told of a man who swam from person to person in the icy waters of the Atlantic Ocean asking *“is your soul saved?”* and called to those still on the surface to receive Jesus and be saved. That man was a Baptist minister called John Harper. He decided that the icy ocean was his final mission field, because he knew that it very well be the only chance people would have to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour before their soul’s final destination, and succumbed to hyperthermia in the waters trying to get to as many people as he possible could.

Thirty years ago, Sam answered the call and prayed for people as the Holy Spirit led him. Would we too stand in the gap for the lost around us? Going back to the three stories shared earlier:

***Story 1***: Ramu\* was told that there may be no way to reconcile him to his earthly father, but there is a Father who loves Ramu very much. Today without hands, Ramu lifts his heart in worship to his Heavenly Father.

There are 23 million Ramus in India alone. It is easy to pray to leaders and nations, but what about the down and outs? What did you last reached out and prayed for the insignificants around you?

***Story 2***: Leela\* who was convinced that no power on earth could transform her husband, found that the power of the cross changed her husband Ramesh\*. The restored family now worships their Heavenly Father.

There are many victims of domestic abuse but we are not aware of them. Are we making ourselves available to listen and pray for them?

***Story 3***: Lakshmi\* who thought her dream was crushed as she was stuck in a brothel heard of the redemption of a woman who had a similar fate as her (Mary Magdalene). Today she is married to a respectable man in YWAM, who saw the beauty in her.

There are 6,000 Lakshmis in Mumbai alone. One can wonder just how many there are in Kuala Lumpur? Are we reaching out to them?

Mission work is the willingness to go into the places where Jesus is still not known and start with a simple question: *“What’s your story?”*. There is no need to be specially sent as a missionary or by a ministry.

In closing…

There was a Spirit filled Pentecostal buying groceries and at the checkout counter he felt the Holy Spirit say “Tell him that I love him.” The man thought to himself that “*this is a godless place*“ and there is no need to obey. For an hour after the Holy Spirit spoke against the man “*You disobeyed Me! You disobeyed Me!*” Finally the man could take it no longer and went back to the store but could not find the man who serviced him at the checkout. He asked the floor manager where was the man, only to find out that the man shot himself in the bathroom after servicing his last customer, the Pentecostal man.

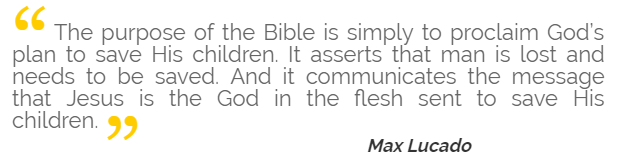
In another recollection from the 1984 Olympic outreach, a team from YWAM went into a Los Angeles neighbourhood with 58 houses. After going from house to house with no results, the team came to the last house. They knocked on the door but there was no answer. Discouraged, the team wanted to leave since work in this neighbourhood seemed futile, but the team leader insisted to try again. They knocked again the second and the third time. On the third try, they heard heavy footsteps after a while. The door flew open and a big, angry man came out. The frightened team handed him a track and ran.

Six months later, another team from YWAM went into the same location and had the same responses from the 57 houses. When they reached the 58th house, the man was happy to see them. He explained to this team that he was in the attic with a noose around his neck ready to kick off the chair below him when the previous team knocked on his door. He stayed still hoping what he thought was a salesman would go away. As he was making a second attempt, there was the knock again and he stayed still. On the third attempt, the third knock came again. He took off the noose in a rage and had in mind to punch the salesman at his door for disturbing his suicide attempts only to find a scared team of missionaries who handed him a track and ran for their lives. Little did that team know that they had saved a man from eternal damnation, and the new team was able to guide him to Christ.

Here we see a stark difference in the responses. On one hand, disobedience costed a man’s eternity. On the other, persistence helped a man to live and find eternity with God.

You may be the last possible link between a person’s eternity and death. All we need to do is talk about Jesus. Our challenges moving forward are:

1. Speak to those we know (family and friends) who have yet to believe.
2. Pray for the people we do not like but want them to know Jesus.
3. Ask for the Holy Spirit to fill us.



Sermon summary by Adeliyn