

**SERMON: Go, Send, Or Disobey Acts 12: 24- 13: 13**

In his book *Night*, Elie Wiesel tells the story of the horrors of the holocaust and his experiences in Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald. In one chapter, Wiesel describes the trip to one of the camps in a German train car. The malnourished prisoners were so hungry that at one point a son killed his own father for a piece of bread. But more shocking than that were the well-fed Germans who watched in amusement as it happened. They had more than enough bread to spare, but they were willing to watch as others literally starved to death.

In her fictional series *The Hunger Games*, Suzanne Collins tells about a country called Panem that rises out of the post-apocalyptic ruins of the United States of America. That country is divided into twelve different districts, the poorest which is District 12. In District 12, the citizens struggle to get food on the table. Many resort to breaking the law just to have enough food to survive. Meanwhile, in the nation's capitol citizen live in unspeakable luxury. Their parties are filled with a gluttonous spread of all the best foods imaginable. And while their neighbors literally starve to death, the citizens of the Capitol drink a liquid that causes them to vomit proving room in their stomachs for more food.

Both of these stories—one true and one fictional—drive home the same point: *it's tragic to allow others to die hungry when we have more than enough bread to spare.*

We understand this when we think of physical starvation...

- Years ago I took a mission trip to the Dominican Republic and our group went out to eat for lunch a few hundred yards away from a group of young boys that were begging for food. Needless to say, nobody had much of an appetite after we saw how starving they were.

But somehow we're able to ignore a more deadly starvation. *We live in a world where nearly 2.76 billion people have no access to the Gospel.*

- Not saying 2.76 billion non-Christians, but 2.76 billion unreached
- Explain UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS
- The world is like a waffle, not a pancake

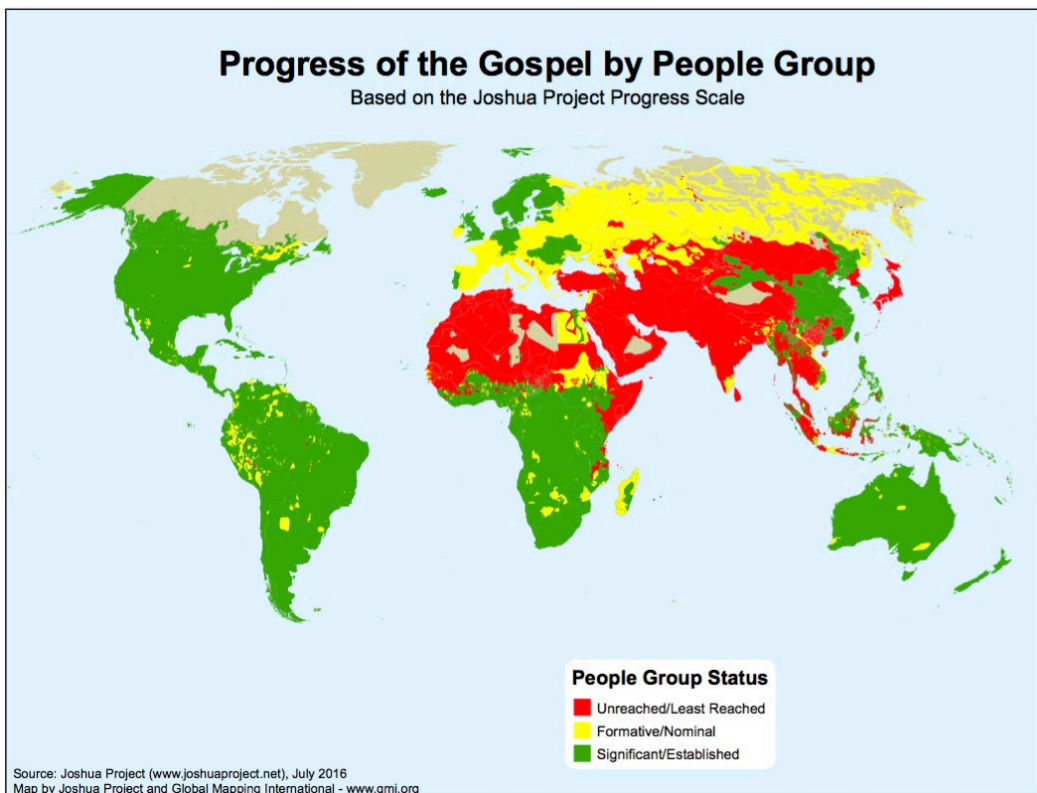


**40.6 %** OF THE WORLD  
POPULATION  
LIVES IN UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS.

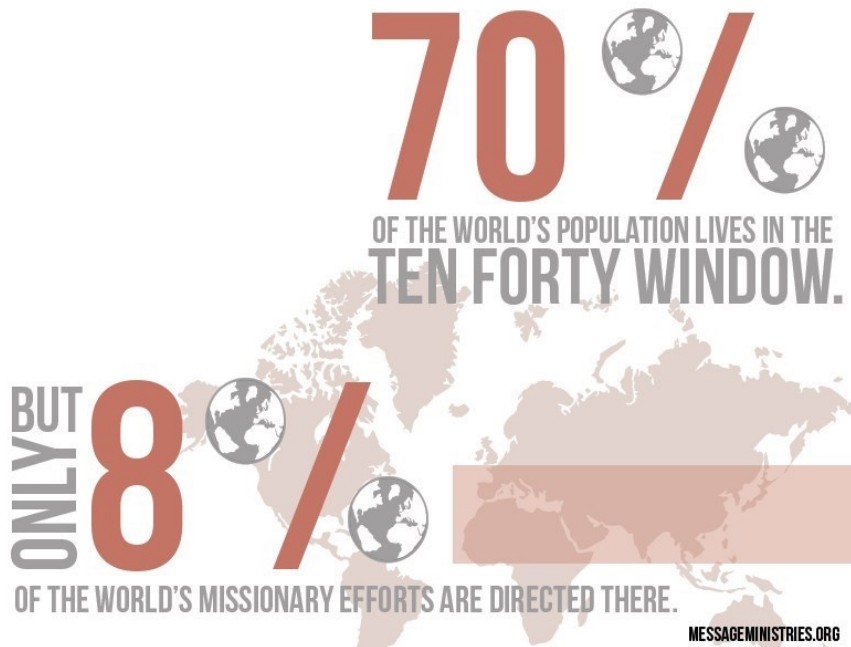
THAT MEANS THAT THERE ARE ABOUT  
**2,760,000,000,000**  
(2.76 Billion) **PEOPLE**

*alive today who have never heard  
the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

MESSAGEMINISTRIES.ORG



- **1040 Window**—a region (mostly in the eastern hemisphere) located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator



**Why should this concern me?!?**

- **The Great commission is global!**
- **Matthew 28:18-20** — *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*
- **Psalm 86:9** — *All the nations You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.*
- **Acts 1:8** — *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*
- **Revelation 5:9-10** — *And they sang a new song, saying “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain, and by Your blood You ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.*

**The Great Commission is a call to take the Gospel to our neighbors, yes, but also to the nations!**

**There are only three responses to our task to take the Gospel to the nations—we can go, we can send, or we can disobey.**

**Turn to Acts 12:25**

- Last time we saw Saul and Barnabas they were leaving the church in Antioch on a mercy mission to bring a love offering to the church in Jerusalem, which was suffering a food shortage.
- We’re going to see Saul and Barnabas return to Antioch, but they won’t stay for long.

**There are only three responses to our task to take the Gospel to the nations—we can go, we can send, or we can disobey.**

## 1) All of Us Should Send.

- **Read 12:25-13:4**
  - *First intentional sending out of missionaries to the nations.*
  - The church sent, AND the Spirit sent
  - *We are never more in tune with God's Spirit than when we faithfully get on board with God's mission.*
- PBC has at least six outside ministries we partner with, in addition to our denominational giving which supports over a dozen different institutions and thousands of missionaries.
- New requests for financial support all the time!
- How do we know who to help?

## 4 Questions About Sending:

### A) *What Should We Send People to Do?*

- **Answer:** *We should prioritize Great Commission work*
- This means prioritizing *evangelistic* work, not just *mercy* work
  - Mercy work is important and great (after all, Saul and Barnabas had just returned from a mercy ministry trip to Jerusalem), but it's not necessarily the same thing.
  - Not just clean water, medical teams, humanitarian work, etc. but *GOSPEL* work
- But the Great Commission is *teaching*, not just *baptizing*
  - We don't want merely Gospel proclamation, but Gospel instruction. New believers need to be welcomed into congregations that teach and disciple them.
- So we should prioritize local church work that aligns with our core convictions

### B) *Who Should We Send?*

- **Answer:** *We should prioritize the godly people we know.*
- Saul and Barnabas are known by the believers in Antioch

### C) *Where Should We Send Them?*

- **Answer:** *We should prioritize the unreached and least reached.*
- LOTS of confusion about what an unreached people group is
  - There are no unreached peoples in America
    - How many Gospel-preaching churches are there in the Peninsula?
    - How many songs that proclaim the Gospel are on your phone?
    - How many Gospel-proclaiming podcasts can you access?
    - How many Gospel-proclaiming books can you get your fingers on?
    - How many copies of God's Word do you have?
    - How many Gospel-believing Christians do you know?

## This is why we've focused on Acambay

### D) How Should We Send Them?

- **Answer:** *With all the support we can muster.*
  - *Giving*
  - *Encouragement*
  - *Prayer*
- **Give consistently** (it's hard to know how much we can support a Gospel partner if we can't predict our giving)
- **Give sacrificially** (it's hard to graciously support our Gospel partners without sacrificial giving)
  - **John Piper** — "An \$80,000 or a \$180,000 salary does not have to be accompanied by an \$80,000 or a \$180,000 lifestyle. God is calling us to be conduits of his grace, not cul-de-sacs. Our great danger today is thinking that the conduit should be lined with gold. It shouldn't. Copper will do. No matter how grateful we are, gold will not make the world think that our God is good; it will make people think that our god is gold."
- **Encouragement -- Go on short-term support trips**
- **Pray regularly** (Join us for prayer meetings on Sunday nights)

Not an accident that through prayer the missionaries are sent out in the first place

There are only three responses to the Great Commission—*we can go, we can send, or we can disobey.*

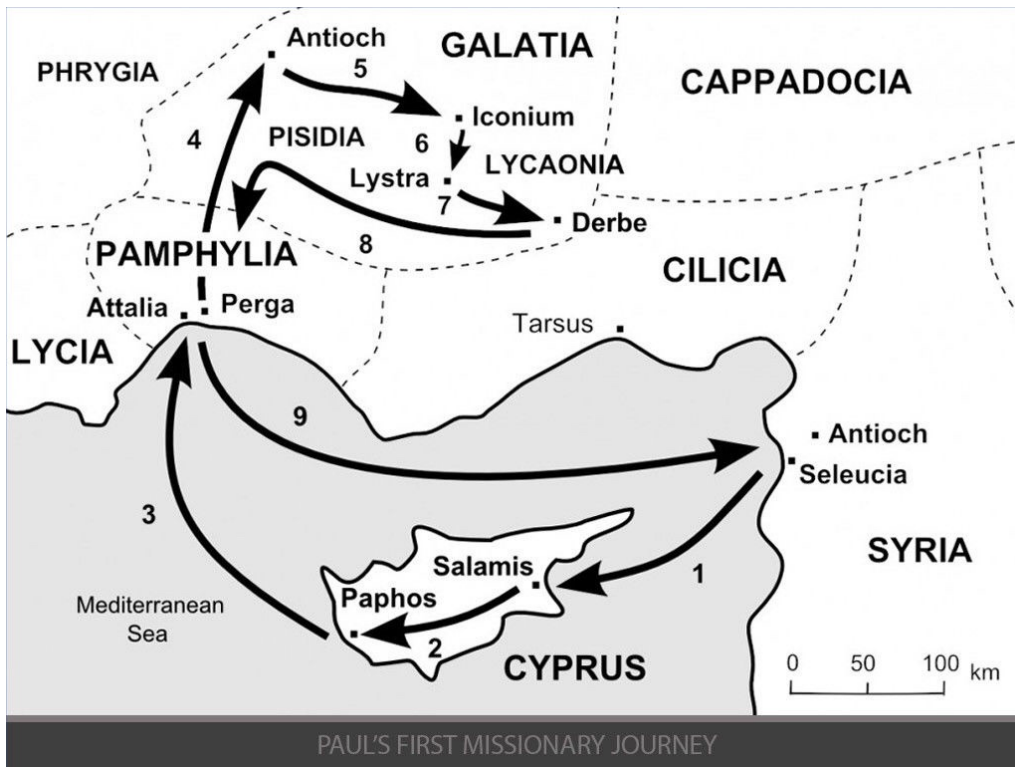
### 2) Some of Us Should Go.

**Clarification:** *all of us are called to be involved in Great Commission work. The question is not "should I make disciples, but where and how.*

That said, *some* of us should go to the *unreached* and *least reached*.

### What to expect when you get there...

- **Be Prepared for Difficulties**
  - **Read v. 4**
  - 16 miles from Antioch to port city Seleucia
  - 130 mile boat ride from Seleucia to Salamis
  - 90 mile journey from Salamis to Paphos



- **Be Prepared to Encounter Indifference**
  - **Read v. 5a**
  - No record of how they responded
  - Sometimes that's what happens when we share the Gospel. We're met with indifference. Don't lose heart!
- **Be Prepared to Need Help**
  - **Read v. 5b**
  - John Mark is helping them (cf., 12:25)
  - One of the responsibilities of a sending church is to learn the needs of those we send out so we can seek to meet them
- **Be Prepared to Face Opposition**
  - **Read v. 6-8**
  - Every time the Gospel advances, so does opposition
  - Opposition doesn't mean you're in the wrong place!
- **Be Prepared to Change**
  - **Read v. 9a**
  - God didn't change Saul's name to Paul. Saul went by the Greek name Paul in order to better fit in with the culture he was trying to reach.

- **Be Prepared to Rebuke**
  - **Read v. 9-11**
  - Paul didn't say "well that's your opinion/truth/perspective..."
  - The Gospel is a straight path!!!—**Repent and believe!!!!**

**THIS SHOULD LEAD US TO PRAY FOR OUR MISSIONARIES**

**THIS SHOULDN'T DISCOURAGE YOU FROM GOING!**

- **Jim Elliott**—"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."
- Also, even though mission work is *hard* it's also *rewarding*
- **Be Prepared to Experience God**
  - The Holy Spirit in **vv. 2, 4, 9**
- **Be Prepared for Some to Believe**
  - **Read v. 12**
  - This may be the first convert with zero connection to Judaism
  - We need to be careful not to measure the effectiveness of someone's ministry by how many people repent and believe.
  - The goal is faithfulness!

**CHRISTIAN: HAVE YOU EVER ASKED THE LORD IF HE WANTS YOU TO GO?**

- **I don't say this to guilt you!!!!**
- **This is hard for me as a pastor, because God could call our best!!!** (He did at Antioch!!!)

There are only three responses to the Great Commission—*we can go, we can send, or we can disobey.*

**3) None of Us Should Disobey.**

- **Read verse 13**
  - Not sure why, but it seems this is sin on Mark's part
- **Read 15:36-40**
  - He broke up Paul and Barnabas!!!
  - He's the Yoko Ono of the Bible!!!
- **THE GOSPEL:**
  - **2 Timothy 4:11** — *Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.*
  - Imagine Timothy knocking on Mark's door...
  - As amazing as that would be, imagine the Holy Spirit speaking to Mark, "I've got a job for you..."

Christian, with a God like that why would you ever want to be silent?

Friend, with a God like that why wait one more second? Repent and believe!!!

**There are only three responses to the Great Commission—we can go, we can send, or we can disobey.**

**Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;  
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,  
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.**

**Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.**

**Though they are slighting Him, still He is waiting,  
Waiting the penitent child to receive;  
Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently;  
He will forgive if they only believe.**

**Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,  
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.**

**Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;  
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;  
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;  
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior has died.**