

V. Global Ministries Conference 2022
“Gifted to Serve”
Mark 10:45
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
March 6, 2022 • Sunday Morning Sermon

The Word of God say this in Mark 10:45, [45] *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

The pledge card you have will be brought forth in the same manner as it was recorded in the New Testament where the offerings are bought forward and put at the feet of those who are being sent for the Savior. The flags and the missionaries will go out and we will have committed ourselves in the faith promise.

I am reminded of a couple of things at this time every year. One is we have a number of new members over the past year and secondly there are new Christians that are here, being disciplined and growing in Christ. Then we come to this faith promise giving and this is a big deal here at Briarwood, a legacy. Unfortunately, this kind of commitment to world missions in many evangelical churches has been affirmed through various studies, is dissipating. There are a few things that keep this before us, this fulfilling of the Great Commission, not only in our commitment locally, regionally and nationally but also world missions. Early on the leadership of this church made a decision to keep this dynamic of cross-cultural missions at the forefront and in this study, we will be talking about this faith promise commitment which is the giving to missions.

I want to thank the Global ministries team who guides our ministry of world evangelism and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. This is probably the largest leadership team here at Briarwood. Here are three reasons I am grateful for this team. One has to do with the work they do to profile who we are going to support, vet the applications to us and then to enfold those to whom we support as much as we can given the cross cultural dynamic of dislocations. Because of this we can set up short term mission trips to visit them, we disciple them, shepherd them and stay in contact with them. We pray for them and are aware of what they are accomplishing where they are.

I'm aware of these appeals to support certain initiatives, groups and individuals but then all of a sudden, we find out the lifestyle of the leader has been called into serious consideration or the integrity of the use of the resources, and this Global ministries team finds these things out before we commit to it. So, when I give in these areas of faith promise I know where it's going, who it's going to, what they are there to do and they are accountable to Christ's church for what is being done. I think that is crucial as good stewards.

Secondly, I'm grateful for this Global ministry team for the conference itself that we get to have here at the church. Mission conferences in general seem to be disappearing like a mist on a summer morning these days throughout the church and so I really appreciate all the work they do to put on these conferences for what we get to see first hand that these missionaries are doing. Instead of a reduction of conferences we are seeing enlargement, focus and excitement for all that they have done which requires a lot of leadership. These conferences then in turn blesses our missionaries and we are blessed by our missionaries.

Thirdly, I'm grateful for this whole dynamic of faith promise itself and how we get there by the text of Scripture and the theme this Global ministry team chose. The theme is 'gifted to serve' as stewards. When I heard that theme my heart leapt within me. Serving with our gifts goes right into the series on spiritual gifts that I'm currently doing. Then this verse they chose from Mark 10:45 which says *[45] For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many...* just leads us right into this faith promise commitment.

Here at Briarwood, to engage in world missions through God-called cross cultural missionaries, and using faith promise allows us to all be apart of cross cultural missions to help with fulfilling the Great Commission. We have a national mission's conference every year and out of that we go into our every member commitment season whereby we communicate to the deacons what our tithes and offerings will be, then the deacons have been instructed by a policy of our session since the inception of our church, to put together a budget where fifty percent of what Briarwood takes in, leaves Briarwood for evangelism, mercy, benevolence, church planting, and church revitalization so 50 cents out of every dollar received to the Lord is sent out for the mission of the Lord beyond us. We also have the world mission's conference and Global ministries conference in which out of that comes our faith promise commitment.

The faith promise commitment is faith – what we believe – that God will get to us this year, beyond our regular giving what He has laid on our heart to give and we promise Him that it will get through us to world evangelism and global missions. We have 280 missionaries that are in a number of countries represented by the flags we display during the Global ministries conference. To learn how we rightly do this is to go to a rightly inspired missionary support letter and that is the letter Paul writes to the Philippians. The church at Philippi was the only church that Paul allowed to engage in partnership with him. That is the language he uses – 'that you have partnered with me.' I'm sure others probably gave him gifts here and there but this church is the only one that regularly engaged in supporting his mission endeavor.

When you read the book of Philippians you will see that Paul emphasizes three things about their partnership with him. Number one is, they partnered with him personally. They would actually send people to be with him where he was serving and we call that short term mission trips. Secondly, they prayed earnestly for him and thirdly, they gave financially to him. The way we are to engage with world evangelism is personally, relationally, prayerfully and financially.

That is why we lay out the faith promise card the way we do. On this card there are five directives for us. One of those directives is for you to think through whether God is calling you to be a part of this Global ministry team. Some people are sent and some people are senders. Some are gifted to serve on a team like this that interviews, shepherds, guides, vets, receive requests and send strategically. If God is calling you to this then you check this box on the card that says you are interested and someone will contact you about that.

Another directive on the card is the opportunity for you to engage in a short-term mission's trip or a special project this year. When you start doing short term mission's trips, they kind of get addictive and then they get you to thinking that maybe they shouldn't be short term – maybe they ought to be long term. I used to do two of those trips a year and I would always bring one of my kids with me and it really got them interested in those as well. So, short term mission's trips are really more than just going to help out the missionary for a short term. It is vision enlarging.

A third directive on that faith promise card is an intercessory prayer plan. Perhaps this year you are just going to pray broadly, like praying for whatever comes out on our MidWeek letter each week. Some may be drawn to particular areas, like Eurasia due to what is happening currently with the war between Russia and Ukraine. But we'd just like for you to put together a prayer plan that prays for missionaries and areas globally. One of the areas that my family has been focused on prayer is the areas of France. I have also been eight times to Uganda and some of the sweetest, witty people are Ugandans. I'm so grateful for the churches being planted there, but I'm praying for the work in France because I have a granddaughter that is living there right now.

The fourth directive on the card is finances. What have you been led individually or as a family to anticipate beyond your tithe by faith what the Lord is going to bring to you/your family systematically, supernaturally or however He will do it but then you promise by grace, as you look to Him by faith for what He will bring to you will be given through you for the cause of world evangelism? This is how you will participate financially in the cause of Christ. This is important because the Gospel is free – Amen – but the plumbing costs. We have to get missionaries to these places, they have to live there, be sustained there with supplies and curriculum and God uses us to partner in that endeavor. Praise the Lord, the river of life is free but the plumbing costs to get it to the right places and God gives us the privilege to participate in that.

There is a fifth directive on that faith promise card. I don't want you to miss this one. Right now, we have just over 400 missionaries globally, nationally and regionally. About 280 to 300 are global and about 120 are national and regional, of those missionaries 70 plus families were members here at Briarwood as they were sitting in conferences we have now and God began to put this on their hearts. If God is laying this on your heart this is where you check the box to let the Global mission's team know and they will find a way for you to serve. How can you prepare for that? How can you be sent out? This team will help you.

The last thing I would say about this Global mission's team and the theme and Scripture they have chosen is I appreciate that it points us right to Jesus. This faith promise card is not to Briarwood or to the Global ministries team, but in those five areas listed on the card we are looking in our commitment to Jesus. We are looking to give to Him who gave Himself for us and we're looking to give ourselves to Him to do what He has given us to do and it's called the Great Commission. We are the body of Christ – we are body number two. We are to carry out His mission until He returns in the glorified body number one and He tells us what we do by showing us what He did in body number one.

Body number one is the Incarnation – the Son of God in the flesh. This is an astonishing Biblical truth of more than miraculous proportions of eternal significance. Over 2,000 years ago Jesus became what He had never had been while continuing to be what He always was and is. He always was, is and will be the Son of God. The question is why did Jesus become something He had never been over 2,000 years ago? The Bible has multiple bullet formed texts that tell us why. It may be Jesus in the Gospels when He said "The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10). It may be in I Timothy 1:15 where it says *[15] The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...* It may be Hebrews 1 or Colossians 1 or that missionary letter Paul wrote to evoke our giving personally, relationally, prayerfully and financially.

What does Paul do? Paul builds right in Christology of the Incarnation. Here is the motivation... Philippians 2:5-8 says *[5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in*

Christ Jesus,[6] who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,[7] but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. It is Christ who is not only the reason but the model for how we carry out the mission He has secured in His Incarnation. II Corinthians 8:9 says [9] For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.

We have all these captivating statements and one of them is the one the Global ministries team selected for us. Mark 10:45 says [45] ***For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.*** Don't miss those bold words for you have to know the backdrop here of this passage. The Disciples have entered into another discussion on how to get promoted in the Kingdom. They want to know how they can get exalted. James and John brought it up twice and one time they were helped by their mother. One wanted the right and one wanted the left. This is another one of those moments when they are discussing among themselves how to get promoted in the Kingdom of God and Jesus rebukes and reproves them but then He says 'just look at Me...' note the title He uses ...Christ in the Messianic titles He used about Himself when He is quoted in the Gospels, by far the number one title He would refer to is the one that crops up so gloriously in the book of Daniel – the Son of Man. The Son of Man is what He had never been, He became without diminishing what He always was, is and will be.

Why? Mark 10:45 says [45] ***For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.*** Christ came as a steward servant. Jesus is showing us servanthood. For the sake of the mission, He freely gave and laid aside His privileges and riches in glory. He didn't lay aside His attributes for we didn't have 33 years without a Trinity, but He did lay aside the privileges of it in order to humble Himself to the point of death, even death on a cross – meaning an atoning death – to give His life a ransom.

What is meant by ransom? A ransom is something you pay to set something free. It is something that is required to emancipate something else that is under bondage. So, Jesus comes and gives the ransom. What is the ransom? His life is the ransom. The ransom is that Jesus came and took our place two ways. First, He took our place by going to the cross and dying an atoning death to set us free from the curse of sin. II Corinthians 5:21 says [21] *For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Secondly, He gave the perfections of His life to prepare and perfect us for entrance into glory. In other words, His atoning death at the cross took away all of our charges, guilt, shame and condemnation so the gates of hell are shut. God can't send me there for Jesus has already taken it upon Himself at the cross in my place. The God who is holy who says the guilty will not go unpunished (Nahum 1:3), is not a God of double jeopardy – getting two punishments for the same sin. Jesus paid it all. He paid my debt that my sin had mounted up before a thrice holy God. Then He perfected me with His righteousness, not mine, so that we might become the righteousness of God (II Corinthians 5:21).

Heaven is not for the forgiven. Heaven is for the righteous. My righteousness is like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), but I'm not going to heaven on my righteousness. I'm cleansed of my sin by His blood and I'm clothed with His righteousness. So, I'm forgiven and hell's doors are shut and with the righteousness of Christ I am accepted and heaven's gates are opened. We are accepted in the beloved and that's the ransom – His atoning death of His life and the righteousness of His perfect life is what brings us to glory.

Who is the ransom paid to? There are very significant errors I hear in sermon after sermon that Jesus did not pay the ransom to save. I hear our government say ‘never negotiate with a terrorist’ and if you think a human government doesn’t negotiate with a terrorist let me assure you that the King of Kings does not negotiate with a terrorist usurper. He didn’t pay the ransom to Satan and set us free, no, no, no, He came to defeat Satan and all of our enemies. When He comes again, He will destroy them. He paid the ransom to His Father. That’s why on the cross, the Father, who in His holiness and justice had placed the judgment upon us for our sins – Jesus whom the Father sent to take our place as the Son of Man on the cross bearing our sins, says to the Father in Mark 15:34, [34b] *“Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?”* which means, *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* The ransom was being paid for all the hell of all of His people for all of their sins was falling upon Him. When He had paid it all He then speaks again to the Father in John 19:30b, [30b] *“It is finished,”* and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. The payment has been made, the ransom is secured and the resurrection shouts the victory of the Redeemer who brought the ransom.

Who has been redeemed? All of His people. Jesus says in John 6:39, [39] *And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day.* He will lose not one. He has set them free from the guilt and shame of sin for He has made them innocent. He has set them free from the power and dominion of sin for they have been born again. II Corinthians 5:17 says [17] *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* He has set them on the progress of the pilgrim of growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ and perfecting them as they eradicate sin and put it to death in thought, word and deed until the Day they are brought to be with Him. And in that Day He will perfect them in body and soul for all eternity. They have been set free! Jesus is their Ransom and Redeemer. It is this Savior who now commissions us, the body of Christ, to take this message to the world.

There is another coming of Christ. Did you know that Jesus is coming again? I want to thank all of you gave last year for not only have you helped us with some very important ministries in ministering to these refugees but we were able to get started because of the generosity of last year’s faith promise giving. As soon as the invasion happened people started sending me notes on why this is the sign that Jesus is coming again. People are saying that the war in Eurasia is the sign that Jesus is coming again. I’m not trying to mock here or anything like that, it just always happens. Wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes and all of those are not signs of the second coming. Please don’t buy a book that it says it is, for those are the birth pangs. Those are the pangs that are telling you that everything is groaning to be delivered and like birth pangs they are going to get more intense and more cataclysmic as we move to that moment, but they’re not the signs.

I’m passionate about this because one of the reasons I love a mission’s conference is that I am involved in the second coming. Harry, how are you involved in the second coming? It is because I know the two signs of the coming of Christ. He will not come back until the Gospel has been preached to all the people groups, all the ethne, so we are doing what brings Christ back. Starting a war is not what will bring Him back. No, it’s let’s do missions. Let’s partner with those who take the Gospel to all the people groups because the second sign is that Jesus tells us He is not slow about His promise to return for because He is patient He will not return until every one of the beloved have been brought to faith and repentance in Christ. Until all of His people are saved from every tribe and nation, and they can’t get saved unless we get the Gospel

to them and somewhere someday the last one is going to say ‘I’ve trusted in Jesus’ BOOM, the trumpet sounds.

That is why Peter calls evangelism and missions ‘hastening the coming of the Lord’ (II Peter 3:12). If you want Jesus to come back again then start evangelizing. I was recently talking to a guy on a plane coming back from a counsel meeting this past week and I got to thinking ‘if this guy prays to receive Jesus, this could be the last one.’ There is somebody out there that will be the last one. That archangel has to work on his vocal cords – let’s shout buddy, come on!

When I was a kid, we couldn’t wait for my grandparents to come to our house for Christmas for many reasons. It seemed like they would never get there. Me and my sisters would just sit at the front windows but it seemed like they would never show up. It seemed the more we looked the longer it took. One time when I was doing this my mother came up to me and said ‘If you keep looking it’s going to take longer. If you want them to get here sooner then get busy and go clean up your room.’ It’s when you go to work that the time goes quicker. It will hasten their coming.

So do you want Jesus to come back? Then go to work. Here’s what Jesus said when they asked Him when He would return from Acts 1:6-8 which says [6] *So when they had come together, they asked Him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* [7] *He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. [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 Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* Basically, Jesus told them it wasn’t for them to know, so go to work with My Spirit upon you as you go to the world. Then comes the end which is the beginning for His people. This is why I love faith promise – it hastens the coming of the Lord. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege to serve You. As you consider your faith promise, pray with me, Jesus, You’re sending us to all the nations because people need the Lord and the mission of Jesus needs to be completed. We consecrate what we give. God I love the line from a hymn that we sing ‘little is much when God is in it.’ We are before You Lord for I’m not doing this to be saved for Jesus has already paid the price so I now just simply want to follow Him. Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe and it’s not what I owe to pay You back but I’m saying that because He paid it all I don’t own myself for You own me Jesus. I have been bought with a price, a ransom and if You served and gave now I want to serve and give to You to reach those who need You, in Jesus’ Name, Amen.