

**“A GREAT TREASURE & WHAT TO DO WITH IT”
(A Missionary Commissioning Message)**

ROMANS 1:14-16

“I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Thank God for men and women who hear the “Macedonian Call” to “*come over and help us!*” (Acts 16:9) Thank God for those who obey the Master’s command to “*be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8) You join the many who down through the years have left their homeland to go to other lands with the remedy for sin’s ruin – the Gospel of the grace of God.

You follow in the footsteps of obedient saints such as Adoniram Judson, Mary Slessor, Amy Carmichael, William Carey, Jonathan Goforth, David Livingston, David Brainerd, C.T. Studd, Lottie Moon, Hudson Taylor, Francis Asbury, John and Betty Stam, Granny Brand, Robert Moffat, Jim Elliot, Martin and Gracia Burnham, etc.

You, like these stalwarts before you, have had the same commission. May I remind you of what that commission entails?

I. YOU HAVE A VALUABLE TREASURE, THEREFORE SHARE IT.

Throughout history God has called men and women and entrusted them with a great treasure. As Paul said, “*we have this treasure in earthen vessels.*” (II Cor. 4:7) This statement appears after he had said, “*if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing....*” (II Cor. 4:3) The Gospel is the treasure which has been entrusted to “*earthen vessels.*”

I served with an international mission agency for many years, traveling and ministering in many countries. One problem that I observed was that after some missionaries had been on their field of ministry for several years, they got side-tracked into maintaining and perpetuating the missionary organization and “getting out the gospel” became a secondary concern to them. Don’t do that! I want to challenge you today to distribute this life giving, life changing treasure called “*the gospel*” and keep the purpose of mission to share the valuable treasure God has given you.

The disciples, and we their descendants, have been given the commission to “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel.*” God continues to call and entrust the treasure of the Gospel to men and women to carry to the ends of the earth. What a privilege is yours and ours!

II. YOU HAVE A TREMENDOUS RESPONSIBILITY, THEREFORE SHOULDER IT.

Paul said, *“I have been entrusted with a stewardship.”* (I Cor.9:17) Again, he said *“I am a debtor...”* (Rom. 1:14)

We, like Paul and all who have followed him in cross-culture evangelism, have a great responsibility to three parties:

First, To God who called me and gave me this “treasure in my earthen vessel”;

Second, To *“Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise,”* and to all who have not heard;

Third, To the church of Jesus Christ, of which I am a member, to fulfill the church’s purpose in the world, which is to witness in every country, culture and clime!

Paul took seriously his commission for he said, *“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.”* (I Cor. 9:16-18)

Responsibility requires a response. Unfortunately, many who have the Gospel treasure and who know that they have a responsibility to share it, have not responded! Responsibility brings accountability. I say to those who have the treasure, “Share it”! It is not given to be hoarded, saved, hidden or bottled up in a box with a steeple on top!

We are challenged afresh by those who have shouldered their responsibility to share the unexcelled treasure of the Gospel. May there be many who follow in their train.

III. YOU HAVE A GLORIOUS OPPORTUNITY, THEREFORE SEIZE IT!

Paul said, *“I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.”* (Rom.1:15) He not only was willingly to preach the gospel in Rome – he was eager to seize the opportunity, which he did. An open door was before him and he was ready to go, determined to make the most of it for the glory of God!

There was no hesitation, no half-heartedness, no uncertainty; no second-guessing. With the call of God on his life, with a burden for souls in his heart and with a ripe field for evangelizing before him he was ready to go.

I challenge you to throw yourselves into the work of Christ to which God has called you! One of my life’s verses has been Ecclesiastes 9:10 – *“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.”*

You have a treasure, a responsibility and an opportunity. Do it with all of your heart and do it well! Do your best for the God who has graciously called you into His service! A glorious opportunity awaits you – seize it! And we have ever confidence that you will!

Conclusion

Nathan Hale (1755 – 1776) was a soldier for the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. A spy for the Continental Army, he volunteered for an intelligence-gathering mission in New York City but was captured by the British. He is probably best remembered for his purported last words before being hanged: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." He has long been considered an American hero and, in 1985, he was officially designated as the state hero of Connecticut.

We have but one life to live and to give for a worthy cause, a worthwhile purpose. Those of us who have been delivered from the Kingdom of Darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of Light through the power of the Gospel of the grace of God, have the highest worthy cause and the holiest worthwhile purpose for which to give our lives.

Let us all, who name the name of Jesus Christ as our Savior, give our last full measure of devotion to Him and obey His commission to go to the uttermost for the One who came so far and gave His all for us!

Till the Whole World Knows

"I'll tell to all that God is love
For the world has never known,
The great compassion of His heart
For the wayward and the lone.

Chorus:

Till the whole world knows
Till the whole world knows
I'll shout and sing of Christ my King
Till the whole world knows"

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