

Session 4 Thursday AM Gym By Floyd McClung

Floyd McClung:

Hard to get up early in the morning, but here we are. We're together. God's going to meet with us. Going to have a good time this morning. I'm really excited about being with you. I brought some books along. As Jenny's mentioned, they're back on a table. Brought a couple of books that I've written, and I brought a couple others as well. I wrote a book entitled "Living on the Devil's Doorstep" that I brought along that's about my wife and I's [sic] experiences living in Afghanistan and living in the red light district of Amsterdam that's back there. And I wrote a book entitled "The Father Heart of God: How to Know God as a Father." One of the wonderful privileges we have as Christians, especially.

I want to mention to you a couple of books that have impacted my life. How many of you have read Lords of the Earth by Don Richardson? Anybody read "Peace Child"? Okay, more of you. This "Peace Child" was the book written by Don Richardson that kind of told his story. Going to New Guinea, working with a tribe of people, and a lot of people said, wow, he was like the perfect missionary. I love adventure, but when I read about Don Richardson, I thought, man, I don't know if I could do what that guy did. It was so inspiring and amazing and tough. So then he wrote another book entitled "Lords of the Earth" about a missionary who had a lot of problems in his life.

If I remember right, Stan Dale was turned down by three missionary organizations, and he wanted to go so bad that he lied on his fourth application to the fourth organization. And they

took him anyway, and God used him. And this is the story of an imperfect guy who had problems, but he made it, and God used him to make a tremendous impact, and that's back there. His son, by the way, was not a Christian. He read the manuscript before it went to the publisher about his dad's life and gave his heart to the Lord. Just reading about his dad is really neat.

And then "Bruchko," "For This Cross I'll Kill You." Used to be called fantastic book. 19 year old guy went from Minneapolis down to South America, had \$50 a month support. His church said, you can't go. His pastor said, this is very unwise. Everybody advised him against it. His mother was weeping at the airport saying, please don't go. He went anyway, and he had a burden for a particular tribe of people. He had to learn Spanish first. Then he learned the tribal language. Took him seven years to get to the place where he could share the gospel for the first time.

And this guy, Bruce Olsen, has now become the friend of four different South American presidents. He's spoken to the United Nations, and God used him to make an impact on a people group. That is just fantastic. This is one of those kind of stay-awake-all-night kind of books. So if you want something to really spoil your sleep and stir your heart, I recommend it highly.

Let me just read something to you this morning about the nations. Get this up here and get organized. If the world was a village of 100 people, if we could shrink the Earth's population to a village of 100 people, what would it look like? What would our village look like with all the existing human ratios remaining the same? Here's what the village of 100 people would look like. Fifty-seven people in our village would be Asians. Twenty-one would be European.

Fourteen would be from the Western Hemisphere, North and South America. Eight would be Africans.

Of these 100 people, 70 would be non-white. Seventy would be non-Christian. That is 30% professed Christ. Seventy would be unable to read. Fifty would suffer from malnutrition in our village. Eighty in our village would live in substandard housing. Six of the people in the village would control half of the wealth of the rest of the village. And all six people in the village would be from the United States, and only one of them would have a college education. That's the world in which we live. We live in a global village, and we have an opportunity to make a difference in it as Americans.

My passionate belief is that there's no missions committee in heaven. There's no missions department. I was with a friend of mine several years ago, and part of the organization I belong to, Youth with a Mission. I said, what's on your heart? He lived in Europe. I said, what's on your heart to reach the nations of the Earth and especially unreached people who have never heard the gospel? He said, you know, he said, that's not my calling.

He said, we have set up a department here that will be responsible for reaching unreached people groups. I started thinking to myself, I thought, wow, this is amazing. I'm a part of a missionary organization. And the guy who heads up one of our training centers says that he doesn't have a calling to reach unreached people groups. And furthermore, he set up a missions department on a missions base. I thought what is this? Sounds like a lot of churches I've gone to. They set up missions committees so a few people can do the work for everybody.

Aren't you glad there's no missions committee in heaven? But God hasn't said, "You know, I don't have a burden for lost people. I think I'll delegate that to somebody." So He sets up a committee with a few angels, and he says, "You go take care of people who are poor suffering. Haven't heard of me. I've got another calling. I've got another burden, whatever it might be."

You know, there's no division in God's heart. There's no department within the heart of God where He is delegated part of Himself to love people and to reach out to people and the rest of Him is like studying theology or something like that. One of the tragedies we've made in the church is to make a distinction between soteriology and missiology, between salvation and God between who he is and what he wants to do. If we just want to study about Him or just want to be His follower but we don't want to share in His passion, then we misunderstand Him.

Let me read it to you. God's agenda is the whole planet. He has not delegated His burden for people. He has not set up a committee to reach the lost. He has not set up a department in Heaven, nor should we. The theme of this conference is delighting in the passions of His heart. There is no separation in God's heart between being God and loving people. Nor should we make a distinction between knowing Him and loving what He loves.

So the question this morning for us, I believe, is not whether God's mission to this planet is for the church but whether the church is for God's mission. You see, it's not so much about missions. I don't like to talk about missions anymore because people have weird ideas about missions and most of us think that mission belongs to a fanatical few. So let me speak to you this morning

about God's mission. Not missions for us, but what is God's mission? I thought our speaker yesterday morning in the chapel service captured it beautifully. God is on a mission.

Did you ever see the Blues Brothers movie? Did you ever see that? John Belushi standing with a blue light coming out of heaven with his black sunglasses and black suit on saying, I'm on a mission for God. Anybody see that? You know what the good news is? God is on a mission for God. God doesn't give away the task of loving people. God is consumed with loving people. That is His mission. So what He does, then, is He invites us as the church. He romances us, He wins us. He invites us to share with Him and His longing to touch the heart of every person on this planet.

The great commission then flows out of the first commandment is to love God with all of our heart and our mind and our soul and our body. For those who still say, It's not for me. The poor are not for me. The unreached are not for me. This idea of sharing about Jesus is not for me. It's not my calling or not my burden. I would suggest to you today, the problem is you haven't leaned your head on the breast of Jesus. You haven't put your heart close to His heart. You haven't heard the heartbeat of our Father.

It's not whether we are called. It's whether we're touched by what moves Him. I believe the great challenge in front of us in an information age when we're overloaded with statistics and pictures and information, it's to allow our hearts to soften, our hearts to open, our hearts to be impacted and infected, to be touched by what touches Him. I lived in the red light district of Amsterdam for 18 years. I walked out of the little place where I lived. Two doors to the left of us was a sex

cinema. Two doors to the right of us was a Satanist church. Three doors to the right of us was a homosexual brothel. I was surrounded by sex theaters, prostitutes, child pornography, living in the midst of the visual images, the spirit, the women, the people, the things that were going on in that sex neighborhood.

I want to tell you this morning what the greatest temptation was that I faced. The greatest temptation I faced was not to look at a woman in lust. The greatest temptation I faced was to become callous to human beings. The greatest temptation I faced was to think of them as prostitutes. The greatest temptation I faced year after year was to become hardened. I remember one time, we had a group of men with us, and they were mission executives that come from other organizations to visit Amsterdam for a big conference.

And a group of them came to me and said, Floyd, will you take us on a tour of the red light district? And I normally hated doing that. I usually wouldn't take people around. To me, it's like showing off sin. And I had no interest in showing people what was going on. But I prayed and felt like maybe somehow their hearts would be impacted by what was going on in the neighborhood. So here are about six or seven mission leaders and Christian executives. And we walked through the neighborhood and I told them about what's going on. It was a nice sunny day, nice sunny days in Amsterdam.

The prostitutes all came and stood outside of their businesses and outside of their rooms. Hardly had any clothes on. It just so happened that the two girls who worked right next door to us had become friends. My wife had reached out to them. We'd been in the home. One of the girls,

Sonya, was her name, had come over to our house for a birthday party. So I knew them by name. And as we started walking back toward our place, I started thinking to myself, I wonder if Sonya and Else will be outside today. And I wonder if they are, if they will greet me the way they normally greet me, which was, "Hi, Floyd, how are you?" And I thought, what would these guys think of me if prostitutes know me by name?

So I thought, you know what? I'm going to go around the other way. And then I thought, you know, I can't do that. I'm not going to do that. So sure enough, we come walking up to our place and there they're standing, hardly clothes on, smiling. "Hi, Floyd. Nice to see you again. Hi." I'm just thinking now, I don't even know--don't want to know what they're thinking, these guys are behind me.

A few months later, I was in a conference, and one of the guys that I'd taken around on that tour came up to me, great big, broad shouldered, husky guy. He looked at me and he said, "Do you remember that day we went on the tour of the red light district?" I said yeah. And he teared up. He said, "That day really made a difference in my life." I said, why is that? He said, "Remember those two prostitutes who called you by name and you greeted them?" I said, yeah, I remember. He said, "Until that moment, they were prostitutes. He said, but when you spoke to them by name, they became people to me." And he said, "That changed my life."

You guys were not talking about missions. We're talking about people. And it is the central burden of our Father's heart to love people. He cares for people. That is what God is all about on this planet. And He invites you and me to share with who He is and what He's all about. So,

missions is not what an elite few go and do someplace else. Mission starts with feeling and being impacted by the heart of God that somehow we break out of the religiousness and the busyness and the callousness of our lives, the church politics, the theory, and we let our hearts be stirred and moved with what stirs and moves God's heart.

I'm here to argue with you and plead with you today. If you're thinking, "It's not for me, this missions thing. It doesn't relate to who I am." May I suggest to you, that it's not a matter that you're not called. It's a matter that you haven't touched His heart. I was telling the kids yesterday in session at 10:30, I was speaking in Calvary Chapel, and I lived in for a number of years, and I was raised by my mom and dad are wonderful Christians, and my dad's a pastor. And I got to tell you, my dad was born in a suit. My dad sleeps in a tie. I don't think I've hardly ever seen him without a tie. And he thinks he doesn't have a tie on, the anointing doesn't come down or something.

And I was raised in this really conservative Pentecostal home, very legalistic, that grew into grace as we grew up as kids, but still, he always wears his tie. And I go off to Afghanistan. We're reaching hippies, dropped-out kids. This is back in the 70's. We ran a halfway house. I grew my hair long down my shoulders. I got this white Indian guru shirt and grew a big beard. And I didn't walk, I floated, kind of thing.

After two years in Afghanistan, reaching out to people, inviting them into our home, people getting saved, my dad calls me long distance from the States through a staticky telephone call. He says, "Floyd, he said the mission speaker for our conference can't come. Can you get on an

airplane and come and speak?" I'm really excited about this. They say, yeah, I'll come. I'm a little naive. I don't think about what I look like. I jump on an airplane. I fly to Atlanta. My mom and dad live in Tennessee. They drive 3 hours at the airport that come to International Airport in Atlanta and meet me.

I walk through Customs and immigration. I'm so excited to see my mom and dad. I walk up to him, "Hi, mom. Hi, dad." They keep looking for me. My mother, all she does is just her mouth drops open. "Oh, my son." My dad, he said, "Oh, my God." So I preach at the missions conference. Here's all these big wigs in the denomination sitting there kind of trying to figure me out. But you know what? My heart was passionate. I was filled with love.

I was living in the middle of an anti-Christian country where constitutionally, they said they would kill people for becoming Christians. I'd gotten in contact with the underground church and I was passionate that people would have a chance to know Jesus. My brother was off smuggling Bibles into Russia, trying to find the KGB so he could tell him about Jesus. I'm living in Afghanistan. We've got one more sibling at home, my sister Judy. And her line was, "I'm not cut out for this YWAM thing. I'm not called to sleep on the floor." Her thing was, "I'm called to the mall. That's me."

I'm preaching away. One night, I look down on the second row and my sister starts crying. And God's spirit touches her heart and I can see it and I'm excited. My mother, who is very close to my sister, was sitting next to her and she looked up at me and started shaking her head. You can't

have her, she was saying. And she went to Turkey. Then you know what my mom and dad did? They resigned from the church a couple of years later and came and joined us in Amsterdam.

What is it all about? It's not about hearing voices or seeing handwriting on the wall or whatever. It's not some mystical, spiritual, spooky thing called "the call." I don't believe in this stuff called "the call." We have so mystified hearing God, we have eliminated ourselves from the responsibility to get close to His heart and feel what He feels. "Because I'm not called." Give me a break. It's easy to say, you know, I'm not called, so I'm not responsible. We're not talking about something that's for a select few this is God, you guys. This is what God is all about.

Forget church politics and bachelors and master's degrees. Forget about destiny here in America. It's about God. It's not even first of all about how many people get saved, how many churches are planned, how many poor? It's about Jesus deserving the worship and receiving what He deserves.

And if that doesn't capture our heart, then I'd like to suggest you consider getting saved. If this is what the church is not about, then I would like to suggest the church closed down. Maybe that's why in America, the church has not made an impact, because somehow we're more concerned with numbers and programs than we are the passion of God's heart to redeem people and touch them. It's not about vocation. You might say, well, that's not my calling. I'm called to be or whatever. You know what? Every vocation should be dedicated and submitted for his glory, for the worship of His Son. There's no dichotomy here in the kingdom. This is about God.

There's a wonderful passage of scripture in Isaiah 54. I'd like you to turn with me and read it this morning. Isaiah 54, the first three verses, Isaiah 54, is preceded by Isaiah 53 we heard about in the drama this morning. If you haven't read it yet, I really encourage you to go home and read it sometime today or tomorrow morning or tonight, whenever you get a little time to be alone. Isaiah 53 is that beautiful passage that points to the day in the future when the prophet said that there will be a Savior.

He talks about all of us being like sheep, going astray, and that God has laid upon the Savior, the iniquity of us all. One of the parts of Isaiah 53 that became so meaningful to me when I was working on the streets of Amsterdam, is that He had borne our sorrows and carried our wounds. I worked with wounded people. I worked with people who had no hope. And you know what I found in Jesus?

That He had taken their sorrows. He took not only the sin, but the pain of the sin, the consequences. He took the whole thing upon Himself. Bible says He bore all of it, every bit of loneliness, all the alienation, the sense of abandonment, the sin that people did to other people to use them, the exploitation and justice, and He took it all. And yet Isaiah 54 then goes on to show the outworking of Isaiah 53.

If Isaiah 53 is about the Savior, Isaiah 54 is about the church. Let me just make a comment about the church. I grew up in it. My dad, let me just tell you about my dad in the church a little bit. My dad came from Oklahoma in the 30's during the Great Depression. If any of you have read John Steinbeck in "The Grapes of Wrath," it describes what my dad went through.

They were nine children in a very poor family. They got hit in a terrible time of economic deprivation, deprivation in Oklahoma. So they left Oklahoma and they traveled on a Model T four. It took him two months to go from Oklahoma to California. My dad, as a young boy, teenage boy, slept in a tent. He slept in abandoned cars. They were a poor family. They moved up and down the West Coast here, picking fruit to survive. Poverty. Just extreme poverty.

Dad got saved when he was an 18 year-old boy in a little tent meeting in Tulare, California. Didn't have a high school education. And one of those amazing ironies of God, God chose my father to be pastor of a denominational headquarters church filled with seminary professors and PhDs. I love that, don't you?

And he was smart enough not to try and outsmart them. He preached to their hearts. And they loved it because they had a pastor. My dad, in planting churches and starting little storefront churches, I grew up in that environment. The church, to me, was just people with all their fallacies and problems and gossip. First little church my dad pastored was in Long Beach, California. And I remember growing up with weird people. In fact, my dad jokingly gave them nicknames. Because literally, this was a little storefront, little store that we put benches in. My dad went on the street, invited people to come in.

We had Garlic Joe, Italian guy sitting in the back row, he stunk like a garlic. My dad liked it because everybody would move forward and sit up in the front. This was a Pentecostal church. We had shaking Kate with her nickname. Toronto had nothing on us. We had Screaming Laura. I

still remember as a kid, just kind of getting raised off my chair by this blood curdling scream. But somehow it was supposed to be worship.

I wasn't very impressed with the church. And my dad had to deal with gossiping women and deacons fighting with elders. In other words, it was just normal people. I realized, living out of Afghanistan, you know what, I didn't love the church. I didn't see it through God's eyes. And one day I prayed and I said, Lord, please let me see what you see. What did you have in mind? What is your purpose? And I started falling in love with the church of Jesus. It's you and me. You know what the Bible says, one of the most affectionate terms that He uses to describe us?

Bible says that God wanted a people for Himself. Isn't that lovely? Let me personalize it. God wants you for Himself. He wants a people that looks like Himself. So what He did is He made many peoples and put a little bit of Himself in all of their cultures. And then He sent a savior to redeem them, so that of all the peoples of the earth, He could make up a people that was, as I would say, "a many people people." Of all races and cultures and languages so that he would be glorified. He is an all-people size God.

So when we come together with our cultures, our personalities, our languages, God receives more glory. The more people there are, and the more the redemption there's taking place in the cultures, the more glory He gets. Isaiah 54 talks about the Church. Three verses I want to point out to you. In the first verse. Isaiah 54, verse one. It speaks of this church as a barren woman. "Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child. Burst into songs, shout for joy, you who

were never in labor, because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband."

The Bible says that's who we are, we're like a barren woman. We're unable to have a child. We cannot bring forth a child in ourselves. There's something wrong with us, and therefore, because of that, there is shame upon us. Capture the picture of a culture where having a child is a sign of God's blessing and approval, and there is no child. And because of that, they're shamed.

We had a guy working for us in Afghanistan, his name was Ishmael. And Ishmael only had one wife. Now, in Muslim cultures, you can have four wives. And I asked him one day, I said, "Ishmael, why don't you have more wives?" "Oh, Mr. Floyd, he said. "Too many problems." That's a smart Muslim. Now, his wife was very fruitful. She had children, and all of them were boys. And that was a good thing in that culture, because boys were like, well, what it means practically is they go out and work and support mom and dad. So men and women preferred to have boys instead of girls.

His neighbor, on the other hand, and his wife had no children at all. And this was a tremendous shame to his neighbor's wife and to his neighbor. Ishmael's wife became pregnant with her fourth child, came time for her to deliver, and I noticed that Ishmael was not his normal, cheerful, proud self. I kept expecting him to come to us someday, worked in our home and helped us, and I expect him to come someday and just be beaming and tell me all about his baby boy. It didn't happen. And after a week or two, I finally said, "Ishmael, what's happened? Did your wife give birth?" And he said, "Yes." And I said, "Well, are you proud? Are you excited that it was a boy?"

"Yes, it was a boy." But he said, "I gave away my boy." I said, "You gave away your boy?" He said, "Yes, I gave my boy to my neighbor because he had no son, and I wanted to remove his shame."

You know what God has done for us? He takes those of us who are barren spiritually and who know what shame and abandonment and loneliness means. And He gives us beauty, He gives us peace, He brings fruitfulness into our lives. And He's chosen not to do that individually, but He's chosen to do that together.

Verse 2, by the way, if you want to do this, it's really amazing. Look from verse 4 to the end of the chapter, about verse 17. There's about nine or ten things that God promises that He will do to take away the shame of the barren woman. And I call that the nine or tenfold glory of God, what He has promised to do for us as the church. But in verse 2, it says something fascinating.

"Enlarge the place of your tent." He says to this barren woman, "Get ready, you're going to have children. Enlarge the place of your tent. Stretch your tent curtains wide. Do not hold back. Lengthen your cords. Strengthen your stakes." Here's a picture of saying you're going to have a lot of kids. Stretch out. Get ready, prepare.

Now, I find it fascinating that the prophet does not use the picture of a palace. He does not use the picture of a huge building, but He uses the picture of a simple tent to be the container of the blessing. There is something about tents that are really simple. They're easy to use. You can put them up and take them down. You can expand them or contract them. You can set them on any

terrain. They're mobile, they're lightweight. Why was the prophet inspired to use the picture of a tent?

By the way, I got to tell you a story. My wife--I love to hunt. I like to fish. I like camping. My wife's idea of camping is an RV. And I figured out--I was trying to figure out how can I get my wife to go on a camping trip? And Sally loves flowers, wild flowers, and she loves wildlife. So if I can take her anywhere where she can see wild animals in a car, she'll go. So I told her about a place in Colorado. We live up in the mountains in Colorado.

I told her about a high mountain valley that very few people have ever seen. And the fields were lush with wildflowers. I'd seen this valley, had been up to it. It was like the most incredible thing I've ever seen. Waterfalls, elk and deer, jagged peaks around you, like Switzerland. Wildflowers of many colors. And I told her all about it. And then I explained that it would take about a day and a half to walk there and we'd have to camp.

She said, I know what you're doing. This is not fair. And after a couple of weeks of enticing her, she said, "Okay, I'm going to do this, but it better be worthwhile." So my son and my daughter joined us, and we camped. We hiked up. We went over a snow path, climbed over a path at 13,000 feet. It was scary to get there, but man, was it ever beautiful. And then we put up our tent. My wife's slept in a tent for three nights. Can you believe this? Boy, I'm telling you. I don't know. It's like a miracle.

Why did God use tents? To picture us as the church. He's describing us. We are the container of the blessing. We are the blessing. We are the container. You know why? He did not want us to get infatuated with buildings. He did not want us to become enchanted with programs. He did not want us to think culturally about money and big. Just the opposite of the church growth movement and the technique idea of building big, huge churches in America, the spirit of God is saying, "I want something that is easily multipliable. I want something flexible. I want something that will meet people's immediate needs."

So when you meet together in your dorms and you spontaneously pray for each other, when you open up your heart to a friend, to a roommate, and you bear that burden, we are being tents. We're doing church. I wish that God could deliver us of the idea of the ecclesiological political denominational structures, would wipe them out of our minds, and we would see the church as the people of God doing the stuff of being God to each other. That's what church is all about. That's you and me.

And if we could fall in love with doing church, then we could be church. It's touching people. This is what the world needs. It needs God to come through the hearts of passionate people who don't try to program them into the kingdom, who don't try to evangelize them into the kingdom, but simply be God. Be gracious, be merciful. Be there for them. I believe in sharing the gospel. I'm fanatical about telling people about Jesus. But you know what people need? They need to touch Jesus. He needs to be real to them.

I was in India, and we had a couple working with our organization in Delhi and they were newly arrived in India and they were incensed by all the idolatry they saw. They'd been in some Hindu temples and traveled a little bit and just overwhelmed them. So the only model they could think of, the only way to respond was to go on the streets and preach. They came to me for advice. Now, they've been there for two years working this through. They came to me for advice and said, we want to go preach. We think God is going to bless this. What do you think about this?

And they have this strategy of pulling down idols through preaching. India has 300 million idols or something like this. It's a lot, Doctor. You know more than I do. And they said, what do you advise? I said, Let me think about this. I prayed and thought about it for a day or two. And I came back to them and I said, Let me ask you three questions. How many Indians who are not Christians do you know by name? And you've been in their home and they've been in yours? How many non-Christian Hindus do you know by name? Zero.

I said, Tell me three things about Indian culture that you really admire. They said it's all demonic. I said, Tell me, please, that you've lost at least one meal fasting, that you've been sleepless for at least one night weeping, carrying the burden of India in your heart. You've wept over her. Not one meal fasted, not one night of prayer lost. I said, God's told me to tell you, don't you dare preach to India, because you don't love her. You haven't wept over her. You haven't seen her destiny.

You know what? When we go to the streets, when we go to the peoples, when we go to the nation, God wants us to see the barren woman, but to see her fruitfulness, to see with eyes into

the future of what she will look like when God breathes upon her and smiles upon her, and she begins to come forth as the woman that God destined her to be. When I lived in Amsterdam, we had people come through Amsterdam, and you can imagine we attracted every weird prophet in the world. Sin City. They all wanted to come and tell Amsterdam what was wrong. We'd find them standing on the street corners, and it used to offend me. It hurt me.

I cannot tell you how many times we fasted and prayed over Amsterdam. Here is the city filled with vileness. \$1 billion a year of child pornography produced in Amsterdam. The homosexual capital of the world. The city bragged about its sex industry, and I lived in the middle of it. And I heard the cries. I saw the pain. I saw the broken lives. I knew the streets where the prostitutes were ten years in the business, where their lives and bodies were broken down. And here are men and women who'd come and tell Amsterdam what was wrong with her but didn't weep over her.

I cannot tell you how many Dutch people told me, "I hate Amsterdam. It's dirty and it's filthy and it's immoral. It's an embarrassment to me. Why are you there?" I dreamed a dream over her. When I arrived there, we did a survey. We found six churches preaching the gospel. I dreamed that someday there would be churches in the red light district. I dreamed that every neighborhood would have none of that kind of talking about buildings. I'm talking about people who found Jesus and become Jesus to each other. That dream consumed my heart. I saw her through God's eyes. I blessed her in the name of the Lord. I championed her culture. I spoke her language.

I had friends who were non-Christians, who loved Amsterdam more than many Christians. There was a little bar around the corner from us called the City Cafe. I used to go hang out in that bar,

and people would come in off the streets. I noticed after a while there was a regular clientele, about 20 or 30 people, patrons who'd come once or twice a week. But I noticed there wasn't very many. So I said to the owners of the bar, "Why do you keep this bar open?"

You know what they said to me? I said, "You're losing money, right?" They said "We're losing money. We're going in the hole every month." "Why do you do it?" "We can't close. The people who come here, where would they go? They have no other buddies, nobody else to talk to. What would happen to them?" They were so worried about their patrons, they were losing money.

And I was saying to myself, Where's the church? This is what it means for you and I to be missionaries. It's to find our assignment, our place, and be Jesus there and simplicity to go where nobody else is gone and live Jesus out there. I ask you this morning. Can you do that? Can you see yourself doing that? Could you do it with somebody? Could you find a neighborhood? Could you find a people, a city, a nation somewhere, and dream God's dream over her?

In verse 3, it says, "You will spread out to the right and to the left. Your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities." Would you dare today? I would invite you. Would you dare to say to God, "God, give me a city, give me a nation, give me a people that's barren, that's hopeless, that nobody loves, that people curse, and let me love her in Your name?"

Would you dare to learn a language or a culture so that God somehow could smile His smile upon that people through your life? We just sent a team to Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan is a little nation in Central Asia. The sweetest people, the Kyrgyz people, they have such a hospitable

spirit and very gentle, peace-loving. They're Muslims. But they make bad Muslims. They don't want to fight anybody. They don't want to go on any jihads. They just are nice people.

We've got people there learning the language, and they said to me, "Floyd, what do we do?" I said, "Here's your assignment. For the first two years, I want you to do three things: learn the language, love Jesus, and have a good time." You know what? I am deeply convinced if they learn the language and love Jesus and just celebrate life, Kyrgyz are going to start coming to Jesus. It's not that you're going to have to go do something spiritual. "We have to bring God."

You know, I said to them, you don't have to bring God to the Kurgis. Guess what? He got there before you. You don't have to change their culture. Guess what? There's a lot of good things in their culture that I like better than America. The Gospel will take care of that part. Just love the people. Just stay close to Jesus and get to know people, enjoy the culture.

I was with one of our workers there, and they're in the middle of their language learning. They said, "You know, Floyd, we made it our goal. We're not trying to do missions. We're just learning the language. And it's hard, but we remember what you say. So every day we try to have a little fun." And he said, "You know what? It's changed our whole outlook. We like Kyrgyzstan." Could you see yourself going somewhere? Forget where. The issue is not the assignment, so much the geographical sign. Could you see yourself loving somebody on behalf of God?

You see, His mission is our invitation. His mission was to win us through His heart and then to invite us with Him, to go on behalf of Him to others. Too many of us focus, by the way, on the geography. There's three steps to know God's will. Many of us start with step three, and we should start with step one. Step three. Don't start here, by the way. Don't say, God, where do You want me to go? Because most of us, here's how we approach God. God, show me where You want me. God, please don't make it there. Tell me God, where it is, and I'll tell You if I like it.

No, don't start there. Start with God. Start with His longing to win people, to love people. Start with His mission of grace, His romance toward His planet. Fall in love with God. Let the first commandments draw your heart to His heart. That's where it starts. And you know what? When you could say to God, God, please let me tell somebody, then you know you've gotten close to His heart.

Step two, then, is to offer your gifts. That sense of vocation in your life, those abilities and skills, those propensities, those things you enjoy doing, that sense of who you are and the destiny of your personhood to bring that to God and say, okay, God, I've started to discover and know who I am. Now, I want to lay my life before You and say, use it, please, anywhere you want.

And if you cannot stay anywhere. The problem is not anywhere. The problem is a love relationship. I like to say it this way. Why should America get all the people who don't want to go? Hello. Why should America get all the leftovers? Kind of the half-dedicated Christians are saying, please don't send me to Africa. Oh, okay. I can stay. Why should we get cursed with people who are not passionate? America needs missionaries, too. Hello.

And you know how you'll know you're called? It's because you love Him so much. You're so passionate for Him. Anything He says, you'll say, yes, thank you, Lord. Because if your focus is geography, there's something wrong. Do you hear what I'm saying? The third step is to say, Lord, where is it? And you know what? Geography will take care of itself if you're in love.

Man, when I fell in love with Sally, I became a weird guy. I was telling people yesterday, I became a poet. I was into basketball and football and sports. All of a sudden, I was secretly writing poems to this woman. I didn't want any other guys to know because I didn't think I was weird. I loved her. I'll never forget when I asked her to marry me, she said to me, kind of shocked me, she said, "Floyd, I love you so much." She said, "But I've got 18 boyfriends. But you know what? I love you so much, I'm going to give them all up but three."

And I was just so overwhelmed with joy. And then she said, "You know what? I do want to marry you, but I'm McClung. It's just not French. It's just not poetic and romantic. Can I keep my name?" I said, "No problem." And she said, "Oh, there's one third thing here. I love my dad so much, I'll marry you, but I want to live at home with my dad and mom." I said, "It's a great arrangement, I like it. Three boyfriends, your dad, not my name. Yeah, let's get married."

And if you believe that story, I have a bridge I want to sell you somewhere. No, man. I fell in love and she fell in love, and we would have gone anywhere and done anything for each other. It's a love relationship. Amen? Let's pray.

Lord, some of us have got questions and issues. We're still figuring it out. I pray Your spirit will help us. Some of us are in very important junctions in our life of making decisions, Lord, that will affect us the rest of our lives. And I pray above all things that the choices we make will be the overflow of an affair that we have with You. That we will be so obsessed with You.

Lord Jesus. So obsessed with You, so taken so passionate with You. For you and about You. That the inferior pleasures of this world, Lord, will be that they'll be inferior to us. For the superior pleasure of knowing You and loving You. Romance us, Lord, today I pray. Win our hearts. I open my heart to You fresh, win my heart afresh, Lord, win all of our hearts afresh, that our passion is new, Lord, deliver us from church, deliver us from religion, deliver us from everything but passion, Lord, for You.

We long for the barren woman, Lord, to come forth. We long to spread out, Lord, to the left or to the right, so that nations will be able to worship You. I long today, Lord, that the Kyrgyz can worship you, that you'll hear your Son honored in the Kyrgyz language in heaven, Lord Jesus. I long for you, Lord Jesus, to be worshipped by languages You've never heard before. I long for You to be worshipped in cities, Lord, where there's desolation and pain. I long for Your glory to come, Lord, and would You use us, I pray, would You use this, Lord?

Just take a moment, no pressure, but I feel compelled by the Spirit to give you an opportunity to respond. If your heart has been--I don't know how to say it--just in the wrong place. And you want your heart to be emblazed, to be obsessed, to be passionate for Jesus, and it's not. And you

need Him as an act of confession, as an act of humility. Would you stand this morning and join me in saying, Lord, I need you. Touch me at any cost. Lord, I want to fall fresh in love with You.

I need You, Jesus. I need you, Jesus. This is an act of humility, saying, Lord, please open my heart to You. I want my heart to beat with the passions of Your heart. Lord, I want to feel what You feel. I want to lay my head on Your breast. I want to put my ear close to Your heart and hear Your heartbeat afresh, Lord. I want something to happen out of intimacy with You. I'll lay aside all inferior pleasures, Lord.

I'll lay aside all other passions for the superior passion, Lord. Lord, You see us standing. We stand just in humility before You and we open our hearts to You. Would You come and touch our hearts today? Lord, we're not going to try and work something down. We're just going to stand here before You and say, begin something, continue something.

Thank You, Jesus. Thank You for mercy, thank You for grace. Thank You for your kindness. Just thank You. Open your heart to Him. Speak to Him silently where you are. Thank You, Jesus.

Lord, we want the great Commission to flow out of the First Commandment. We want our doing to flow out of our love. We stand here before You today. We sit here before You and we say, deliver us from duty and bring us into delight. Deliver us from the expectations of others, Lord, and bring us into Your desire.

I pray we long for the reality of intimacy with you. And then we'd say, Lord, we offer to You everything that we are, all of our gifts. We offer You all the future, Lord, and we say, Please use us somewhere. Place us somewhere, Lord, where people will know there's a God who cares for them.

Thank You, Lord Jesus. In Your precious name. Amen.

Speaker 1:

You are dismissed. May God be with you.