

Lake Cities Community Church
Mission's Month
April 13, 2008
Pastor Craig Schill

“The Whole World”

Intro:

William Borden had it all. By the age of 21, in 1918, he was a multi-millionaire – and he could have whatever luxury he desired. He went to the best prep-schools, then to Yale University and Princeton Seminary. Not only that - but he was (as you can tell) a very good looking young man and had a winsome personality. He was a natural leader. He was also incredibly smart - the president of the Phi Beta Kappa honor society – and an outstanding athlete – at Yale he played football, baseball, crew, wrestling and rowing. If anyone led a charmed life – it was William Borden.

But, by God's grace, he had something else besides his money and looks and talents – he had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He was blessed with loving Christian parents who kept him grounded and humble. His family came to Christ through the ministry of D.L. Moody and they were very involved in their local church.

And as many wealthy children used to do in those days – when William graduated from High-School his parents sent him on a trip around the world. So off he went to China, Japan, India, Egypt and many other places. And because of his faith, the lessons he learned on that trip were not primarily academic, but spiritual. He wrote to his mother: “I have so much of everything in this life, and there are so many millions who have nothing and live in darkness! I don't think it is possible to realize it until one sees it. I know it is no easy thing to serve the Lord, but others have been enabled to do so, and there is no reason why I should not.” He came back

from that trip a changed person – He had a new vision for the world – its “bigness” and its “lostness”. He was convinced God was calling him to be a missionary to leave his charmed comfortable life behind and take the light of the gospel to the far reaches of the earth.

Need:

This morning we begin our “Mission’s Month” – four weeks of sermons, songs and a global focus on what God is doing in the world. I have two goals for the next four weeks – first that, like Borden, we will see God’s heart for the nations (take our eyes off ourselves and see the bigness and lostness of the world), and second – again like Borden - that we will be challenged to respond to God’s heart for the world and fulfill the calling God has on our church and lives to become global Christians.

Subject / Text: Our text this morning is Psalm 67. We begin in the Old Testament as we see God’s heart for His world. Please turn with me to Psalms chapter 67.

Benediction (1-2)

(1) God be gracious to us and bless us, *And* cause His face to shine upon us— Selah. (2) That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations.

The Psalmist starts with a benediction – a blessing. If the words sound familiar to you it is because they are drawn from the most famous benediction in the Bible, Numbers 6:24-26.

The LORD bless you, and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine on you,
And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance on you,
And give you peace.

Both benedictions call for God’s grace and blessing and for His face to shine on Israel. But in our text – the blessing is extended from Israel to all the nations of the world! “*That your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations.*”

God's special relationship and blessing to Israel was to be a springboard for the rest of the nations to learn about God. One commentator put it this way: "This Psalm involves two major subjects: Blessing and the spread of life-giving knowledge of Yahweh to the people of the earth." - Marvin Tate, *WBC*, 158. The blessing of one leads to the blessing of the others...

I was part of a mission's conference several years ago that had as its theme: "Blessed to be a blessing." That summarizes the first two verses. To those in the dark – we provide the light of Christ. To those in decay – we are the salt of the earth. To those who are thirsty – we bring living water. To those who are dead – we bring resurrection. We have light and salt and water and life – not to hoard them, but to pass those blessing of Christ to others. Blessed to be a blessing.

Many years ago, when a theater in Vienna was on fire a man in one of the corridors was hurrying out. Many others of the people were trying to find their way out so as to escape from the fire. The fire was in another part of the building and the theater was dark, but this man had a single match in his pocket. He struck the match, and by doing so he was able to save twenty lives. He took the blessing he had and shared it with others. Whatever blessings God has given you – whether it is a million dollars, or a particular talent or skill – take that and use it for Christ.

You have light? Great – let it shine! Jesus said, "A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand?" To have a heart for the world means that you have to go public with your blessings which is a great challenge. The world says – you have light – great keep it to yourself. Enjoy your faith, but do not talk about it with others. The idea of a missionary going to another country to tell others about Jesus is greatly offensive to the modern mind and so we hide our light and put away our salt and sip our water alone and in the dark. A friend of our works in college ministry. He is working to develop a

meeting of the Christian faculty members. He talked with one faculty and found him to be a believer. One a different day he talked with another faculty member in the same department as the first who was also a believer. “Did you know so-and-so was a Christian?” “No – really?” They had worked together for five years in the same department and each did not know the other was a believer! Israel’s relationship with Yahweh was a public one – on display so that the blessing could be passed to others.

Refrain: (3)

Verse three is the refrain or chorus - Remember this was a song – sung with stringed instruments – harps and lyres. (3) **Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.**

When I worked in Human Resources we sponsored diversity programs. We needed them because the workplace was growing more diverse every year, and our employees needed to be aware that they were going to work with more and more people each year who were different from themselves. And the differences of race, culture, age brought a depth and richness to the workplace. In some ways the workplace has discovered what the church should be about. The Apostle John says that the heavenly elders turn to Jesus: **“You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” Rev 5:9**

We need to become global Christians now, because we are going to spend eternity with people from China and India and Japan, and Sweden and Africa and England – and the beauty of God’s creation on its own accord will bring great glory to God. Look at verse four:

God’s just rule and guidance (4)

(4) Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness. And guide the nations on the earth. Selah.

One-day the job of missions will be over and God's full authority will extend over all the nations of the world – and he will provide justice and guidance to all peoples. That is cause for rejoicing, because you don't have to look very far to understand we need direction and do not live in a world of justice. In the new recently you may have heard about the Innocence Project which is using modern DNA analysis to review possible wrong convictions. For example, In 1981 Charles Chatman was wrongly identified in a police line up and convicted of a rape - given a 99 year sentence. Over the next 27 years he was denied parole three times because he refused to admit guilt in a crime he didn't commit. DNA testing finally confirmed his innocence and three months ago just 15 miles west of here Chatman was released. Now 46 years old, Mr. Chatman said, "I am bitter toward what happened." There is much bitterness and despair and anger in this world because of injustice. But one day God through Jesus Christ will judge with perfect fairness, and He will guide the nations on the earth.

But verse four is not only for the future – Jesus provides us a standard of justice and guidance today that is desperately needed. As missionaries take the gospel across the globe they bring – not perfect – but better direction and justice and stability to societies.

Refrain (5)

(5) *Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.* Verses six and seven:

Universal Blessing of God (6-7)

(6) *The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. (7) God blesses us, That all the ends of the earth may fear Him.*

The benediction of verse 1-2 and now fulfilled in verse 6-7. God blesses the earth the growth and life – and all the ends of the earth see that it is God alone who brings that blessing and they stand in fear and reverence of Him.

I enjoy finding old hymnals and reading the various songs. This hymn is titled – “The Whole Wide World for Jesus”, 1908, by Will L. Thompson (Hope Publishing)

The whole wide world for Jesus! Once more before we part,
Ring out the joyful watchword. From every grateful heart;
The whole wide world for Jesus! Be this our battle cry;
The crucified shall conquer, and victory is nigh.

The whole wide world for Jesus! From out the Golden Gate,
Thro' all the South Sea Islands, to China's princely state;
From India's vales and mountains, thro' Persia's land of bloom,
To storied Palestina, and Africa's desert rooms.

The whole wide world for Jesus! Its hearts, and homes and thrones;
Ring out again the watchword, in Loud and Joyous tones.
The whole wide world for Jesus! With prayer the song we'll sing.
And speed the prayer with labor, Till earth shall crown Him King.

Application: I began by sharing my two goals for our mission's month. First, that we would each see God's heart for the world – the entire world! How do we do this? Let me give you a practical suggestion. You need to go out to our web site and read at least one blog this week, from our missionaries and post a comment. You read their blogs and there is no comments or maybe one. Let's let them know something special is happening here! You don't have to take a trip around the world anymore – with technology the world can come to you. Parents – this is a great application to do with your children.

The second application is to seek to respond to God's heart for the world and the needs that are there. How do we do this? First pray – commit to praying every day this week for our missionaries. Make it a point around your dinner table – or if you are out to lunch with someone – just lift up the Mill's or Klausli's, or Martin's. Second application is to give generously. Our goal is to raise \$3,000 over this next month for our three missionaries. I know your home budget is tight – and as a new church we don't yet take in enough to cover our own expenses. But I

believe that we can both meet our budget and give \$1,000 love gift to each missionary. I'm asking you to be generous over the next four weeks – to sacrifice something for the sake of the gospel.

Conclusion: William Borden was willing to give up high paying jobs and a life of comfort for the gospel. After graduating from Princeton, He left his fortune in America and went to Egypt to study Arabic in preparation for his ministry in China with the Muslims there. And while in Egypt, at the age of 26 years old he contracted meningitis and died. “What a waste of a life!” some said. But just the opposite. In his Bible were found these words: No reserves. No retreat. No regrets. No one said it was going to be easy. When his death reached America, thousands of young men and women were inspired to give their lives to taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. Have you seen God's heart for the whole world? Go to the blogs and see into Sweden and Germany. When you see God's movements there – we will be drawn to pray for our missionaries and to give sacrificially to bless them in their work. No reserves. No retreat. No regrets. Let's pray.