

West Valley Presbyterian Church

Worth It

Speaker: Ryan Eshoff

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel, so that whether I come see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for His sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” – Philippians 1:27-2:11

Intro

Inverted pyramid: 25 students accepted Christ, about 150 heard the Gospel!

Last summer: convicted about going on a post-grad mission trip

Being accepted to the team was one of those spiritual highs. But it turns out it wasn't going to be that easy.

Sacrifices for the summer: going to my best friend's wedding and sacrificing my dream internship

Philippians 2:5-8: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

What I would have done this summer would have been a glorification of my own earthly abilities, but how would it have contributed to God's kingdom? Summer = metaphorical fast

Even w/out stats: stepping out in obedience is WORTH IT

My campus: emphasized foreign studies, so that in addition to there being a number of international students, most of the nationals enrolled there were studying foreign languages – including many Western ones – with the intent of working abroad, or studying abroad long-term, or being diplomats in other countries.

Identity: students don't realize they are children of God

Luis: Going to church and accepting; spiritual multiplication = Tweeting!

TONY: accepting Christ in Chinese/English/Italian; "Worth it!"

CS Lewis: "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." That might be the phrase that best summarizes the buildup to this summer for me, and it never ceased to spur me on towards sharing while we were there, as difficult as conditions and communication barriers tended to be.

Not mortals! Are we pushing people towards Heaven or Hell??

Oswald Chambers: "In our Lord's life Jerusalem was the place where He reached the climax of His Father's will upon the Cross, and unless we go with Jesus there we will have no companionship with Him. Nothing ever discouraged our Lord on His way to Jerusalem. He never hurried through certain villages where He was persecuted, or lingered in others where He was blessed. Neither gratitude nor ingratitude turned our Lord one hair's breadth away from His purpose to go up to Jerusalem."

"Back to Jerusalem:" Movement from China west through Middle East (Gospel-deprived regions); take good news back to Jerusalem; 10/40 window (b/t 10 and 40 degrees latitude)

Philippians 1:27-30: "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel, so that whether I come see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for His sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have."

Persecution of the Chinese church; suffering for his sake

Spending the summer telling students about Christ for the first time makes for an interesting cyclical effect upon our return home: our message to the students was that the same God that reigns in America reigns over the whole Universe; we saw that in effect

when the Holy Spirit moved in their lives, and that should mobilize us here. Maybe it's EASIER to see God reign THERE than HERE!

Philippians 2:10 and 11: "...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on Earth and under the Earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Every tongue: can not only refer to every individual, but also every language.

Chinese church w/ congregation of 10,000! Gospel preached in vernacular

Oswald Chambers "The aim of the missionary is to do God's will, not to be useful, not to win the heathen; he is useful and he does win the heathen, but that is not his aim. His aim is to do the will of the Lord."

John Piper "Have you ever wondered what it feels like to have a love for the lost? This is a term we use as part of our Christian jargon. Many believers search their hearts in condemnation, looking for the arrival of some feeling of benevolence that will propel them into bold evangelism. It will never happen. It is impossible to love "the lost". You can't feel deeply for an abstraction or a concept. You would find it impossible to love deeply an unfamiliar individual portrayed in a photograph, let alone a nation or a race or something as vague as "all lost people".

Don't wait for a feeling or love in order to share Christ with a stranger. You already love your heavenly Father, and you know that this stranger is created by Him, but separated from Him, so take those first steps in evangelism because you love God. It is not primarily out of compassion for humanity that we share our faith or pray for the lost; it is first of all, love for God."

These passages speak beautifully to what were ultimately the biggest takeaways from this summer. That living missionally isn't something done out of guilt or shame or duty or self-righteousness. That it's not a competition to see who can find the most new Christians, that God isn't up in Heaven playing Fantasy Evangelism and keeping tabs on all our stats. That missions exist because our love for God becomes so rich and bountiful that it can't help but overflow. That that love is the only logical reaction and reciprocation to the truth that GOD loves US enough to send His only son to humble himself to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And that because of all those, sharing the Gospel is far more than just our call; it's our joy, it's our gift. It's worth it.