



## **Doctrine, Passions, and Practices** **Jesus' Mission and how He pursues it**

### **Introduction**

John Harper was born in Scotland in 1872, and became a Christian when we was 14 years old. From that time he started telling other people about Jesus. His passion was to tell people about Jesus. Then he got married, and he and his wife had a child, Nana. But soon thereafter his wife died.

When his daughter was six years old, John Harper was invited to come to America to tell people about Jesus. So he and his daughter and an older cousin got on a boat and set sail. Years later his daughter remembered that one night while on this trip her father woke her up and said they had struck an iceberg. He told her that a ship was coming to rescue them, but just to be safe, he was going to put her on a lifeboat with her older cousin, and he would wait for the rescue boat.

The ship they were on was the Titanic. His daughter and the cousin were saved. And we know what happened to John Harper, because months later at a prayer meeting in Ontario, Canada, a young Scotsman stood up and told the story of his conversion.

He had been on the Titanic, and when it went down, he found himself floating in the freezing water holding onto a piece of wood. John Harper was floating near him, and called out "Man, are you saved?"

"No, I am not," he replied.

He shouted back, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!"

The waves soon took John Harper away. But a little while later, the currents brought him back, and he again cried out: "Are you saved now?"

"No," I answered.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved," he cried back.

Then the young Scotsman saw John Harper lose his grip on the wood and sink into the water. And he said: "There, alone in the night with two miles of water under me, I trusted Christ as my Savior. I am John Harper's last convert."

John Harper knew Jesus, trusted Jesus. John Harper knew what it meant if someone didn't know Jesus, didn't trust Jesus. And so John was passionate about telling people about Jesus, even as he was on the brink of death himself.

### **What is Jesus' mission?**

1. In astonishing goodness and love God created the universe and the world and each of us so we could have the everlasting joy of beholding Him, trusting Him, worshiping Him.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Psalm 16:11** You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

2. But every human being has knowingly and willfully refused to respond to God; we have all rebelled against God.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 1:21,25** For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened ... they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

3. As a result, every human being justly deserves the righteous wrath of God forever.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

4. But in great love and mercy, God chose to save a vast number of people that no one can count from every nation, tongue, and tribe, through Jesus' death on the Cross.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Revelation 5:9** And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Revelation 7:9** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,<sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

5. So Jesus' mission is to save lost people from every nation, tongue, and tribe.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Luke 19:10** "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Timothy 1:15** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

### How does Jesus pursue His mission?

<sup>ESV</sup> **Matthew 28:18** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

1. This command is given to Jesus' apostles, but it applies to all followers of Jesus. One reason is because other Scriptures show that all followers of Jesus pursue evangelism (Mark 8:35; Act 2:47; Act 8:4; Col 4:5-6; I Pet 2:9; etc.). Another reason is because this command is based on Jesus' promise to be present to the end of the age; since the apostles don't live to the end of the age, this command must apply to the whole church.
2. So it's through us that Jesus pursues His mission. It's through us that God has chosen to save people from all the nations. This is both glorious and sobering.

3. Jesus gives two powerful encouragements to help us:

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*

This means we have been sent by the One who has all authority. No one has the right to question our mission.. And we must not question or back off from His mission.

We are like a search and rescue team, and Jesus has said – there's lost people in the world. I am sending you to find them and save them.

*"And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Jesus will be with us. He will never fail us or forsake us. He will strengthen us, satisfy us, comfort us, guide us, and work in and through us to accomplish His mission.



### **How can we pursue Jesus' mission?**

1. Understand that this is our purpose for being on earth.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 20:21** Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

2. As Jesus commanded, "go" to people who don't know Jesus (Mat 28:19). We should not wait for lost people to come to us. Jesus calls us to go to them.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Matthew 28:18** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.<sup>19</sup> Go therefore ...

Go to your neighbors, go to your friends, and go to places where you can meet people who don't know Jesus.

We should also go to unreached people groups. Today there are approximately 1,400 people groups who have no Bible or missionaries or church in their own language and culture. They will not be reached unless someone crosses barriers of geography, culture, language, safety, and comfort. We should all either be goers or senders.

3. Pray and ask God to save these people you meet who don't know Jesus.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 10:1** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

4. Love and care for people who don't know Jesus. Care about all their needs, especially their need to be saved from their sins and brought into relationship with God.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Luke 19:41** And when [Jesus] drew near and saw the city, he wept over it...

If possible, reach out to lost people with friendship and hospitality.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Luke 15:1** Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."



5. Lovingly, humbly, and genuinely share the gospel with them. No one gets saved without hearing the gospel. (See Appendix at the end – "The Good News of Jesus.")

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Corinthians 1:21-24** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe ... we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

It is through the gospel that God causes people to be born again, gives people faith, saves people.

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Peter 1:23** ... you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

<sup>ESV</sup> **James 1:18** Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

6. Lovingly, humbly, and genuinely urge them to repent of their sin and trust Jesus as Savior, Lord, and all-satisfying treasure.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Acts 16:30** Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved ..."

6. Don't be afraid of how people might respond. If you are loving, humble, and genuine, then you can rejoice no matter what happens, because you will be rewarded either with the joy of their salvation, or with more of God's presence now and forever.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Luke 6:22** "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! <sup>23</sup> Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Peter 4:14** If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

### **What should encourage us to do this?**

1. All we have received in Jesus Christ.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ephesians 1:7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ephesians 1:5** In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:35** Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 5:2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.



2. The desperate need people have for salvation.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 10:13** For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."<sup>14</sup> How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

3. The promise that we will experience more of Jesus as we do this.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 4:34** Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

4. The reality that God might use your prayers, love, and words to save someone.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Luke 18:27** But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

<sup>ESV</sup> **Acts 16:14** One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Corinthians 4:6** For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Timothy 2:24** And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,<sup>25</sup> correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,<sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

## **For further discussion**

1. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Do you agree that Jesus pursues His mission through us? Why or why not?
2. How does it help you to hear that all authority has been given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18)? How does it help you to hear that Jesus will be with you always (Matthew 28:20)?
3. Think of the analogy of a search-and-rescue team. Do you agree that Jesus has sent you to find lost people? What steps could you take this week to search for them?
4. Which of the four encouragements (p.4) was most encouraging to you? How can you use these encouragements to stir your heart-motivation for Jesus' mission?

## **Appendix: A Summary of the Gospel**

### **GOD**

- God is full of love and joy in Himself, and created us so we could share in the joy of knowing Him (Acts 17:24-25; Psalm 16:11).

### **SIN**

- Each of us has rebelled against God and turned from the joy of knowing Him to seek our joy in lesser things (Rom 1:20-21).
- As a result, we are separated from God and face His punishment forever (Isaiah 59:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10).

### **JESUS**

- To save us, God came to earth in the person of Jesus (Matthew 1:20-23).
- Jesus died on the Cross, paying for sin's guilt and breaking sin's power, so he could bring people into the joy of knowing God (1 Peter 3:18).
- Jesus rose from the dead, and is alive today, ready to save us (1 Cor 15:3-4).

### **FAITH**

- We are forgiven and freed from sin through trusting Jesus (Acts 16:31).
- To trust Jesus means we turn from whatever else we pursued for our joy, and trust Jesus to forgive us (1 John 1:9), change us (John 8:31-32), guide us (John 8:12), and satisfy us (John 6:35). We express our faith by being baptized.
- In response to faith, Jesus gives us the gift of His Spirit, who fills our hearts with the living presence of Jesus (John 7:37-38).
- Jesus calls us to pursue joy in Him by trusting His promises, studying the Bible, praying, worshiping, being part of a church community, and helping others come to know Jesus.