

2

Partners in the Gospel

Week Two

Daily Devotions
& Small Group Study



Partners Who Understand the Time

September 23-29, 2007



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Study Overview



The apostle Paul gave thanks for the Philippian Christians' partnership in the gospel (Philippians 1:4,5). As we begin a 40-day focus on ministry, let us also give thanks to God for the partnership in the gospel that we enjoy together. We are partners with God in the grandest work of all – proclaiming his glory and drawing everyone around us closer to Jesus Christ our Savior. May the Holy Spirit work in us through our study of God's Word in the next 40 days. May he prepare us for greater works of service that will give witness to Christ and glorify our Father.

To become more faithful partners with Christ, we will look at six weekly topics:

1. **Partners who see themselves as God sees them.** Because you are God's partner, it is important to understand your relationship with him.
2. **Partners who understand the time.** As God's partner, you will want to understand the urgency of God's work.
3. **Partners who see others as God sees them.** To treat others the way your Partner wants, look at them through his eyes.
4. **Partners who understand their personal ministry.** The Old Testament priesthood is a model to help you understand your partnership in the gospel.
5. **Partners who understand their SHAPE.** The SHAPE acronym will help you see that you are a unique partner in God's work.
6. **Partners who understand their call.** Every Christian is God's partner in the gospel. It is a special privilege when Christ calls you through the church to serve in the public ministry.

We will use God's Word in four ways during these next forty days.

- Weekly messages in worship that focus our attention on the topic for the week
- Daily scripture readings and devotions distributed in weekly devotional booklets
- Weekly small group Bible studies
- Weekly memory passages that grasp the key thought for the week.

You will benefit the most if you make use of all these growth opportunities. Please note that if you are unable to attend worship on a weekend, you may watch the message on our website www.stpaulmuskego.org. You may also download the weekly devotions/small group study there as well. If you do not have internet access, you may stop by the church/school office for a weekly devotions/small group study booklet and a copy of the sermon. You may also call and we will mail a booklet to you.

May God bless our study together of our partnership in the gospel.



WEEK 2 – EVANGELISM

Partners Who Understand the Time

Daily Devotions & Week 2 Small Group Study

Table of Contents

Page 2	Study Overview
Page 3	Table of Contents
Page 4	Day 8 The Signs are All Around You!
Page 5	Day 9 One Will be Taken, the Other Left
Page 6	Day 10 Now is the Time to Use Your Talents
Page 7	Day 11 How Shall We Use Our Time?
Page 9	Day 12 Did You See Jesus?
Page 10	Day 13 Look Forward to a Reunion
Page 11	Day 14 Speed the Coming of the Day
Pages 12-19	Week 2 Small Group Study
Page 20	Cheers for Volunteers

Week One Memory Passage: “This gospel will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).



Week 2 – Partners Who Understand the Time

Devotion for Day 8 – Sunday, Sept. 23rd The Signs Are All Around You!



The Word: Matthew 24:1-14

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”



Meditate

Did you notice the signs of the end of the world yesterday? If you watched TV, listened to the radio or read the newspaper, did you hear Jesus whispering in your ear, “I’m coming soon”?

The disciples didn’t have a sense of urgency as they strolled through the temple grounds Tuesday of Holy Week. They didn’t seem to notice the signs that the temple’s days were numbered. But what looks very permanent will soon pass away. Today, if you sit where Jesus and his disciples did on the Mount of Olives, you can only imagine what the temple must have looked like. It is all gone.

As partners in the gospel, we too need to recognize that what seems so permanent now will soon be gone. This world and everything in it is going to be destroyed. That truth has a profound effect on our worldview. It gives us a sense of urgency as we seek to carry out our partnership in the gospel.



Pray

Lord Jesus, open our eyes to see in the wars and rumors of war, in the increasing wickedness, and in the loveless acts so prominent in the news that these are signs that you are coming back soon. Give each of us a sense of urgency. The time to serve you is short. Amen.



Week 2 – Partners Who Understand the Time

Devotion for Day 9 – Mon., Sept. 24th One Will Be Taken, the Other Left!



The Word: Matthew 24:36-51

[Jesus said to his disciples,] “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”



Meditate

You are a saint! Yet we continue to battle against the power of the sinful nature within us. That sinful nature looks at the amount of time that Jesus has been gone and considers that we will have time to do his will – later!

Jesus was speaking to his closest disciples as he spoke these words. They believed in him. Yet, he spoke words of warning: “one will be taken and the other left.” He called them to be faithful servants in God’s kingdom in the short time left to them.

What service for God’s kingdom have you to put off for another season? Is the reason a true, God-pleasing one? Or has Satan deceived you into thinking that there will always be more time to do God’s will – later?



Pray

Confess to your Father in heaven the misuse of his precious gift of time. Jesus’ blood has also washed this sin away. Pray that you and all whom you love will not be caught unprepared on the day of Jesus’ return. Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen in you the sense of urgency.



Week 2 – Partners Who Understand the Time

Devotion for Day 10 – Tuesday, September 25th Use Your Talents Now!



The Word: Matthew 25:14-30

[Jesus said to his disciples,] “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”



Meditate

In the parable, a talent was a sum of money. The Master has entrusted many talents to us. They include the money he has placed at our disposal, as well as our Spiritual gifts, our Hear or passions, our Abilities, our Personality and our Experiences. We will consider the acronym SHAPE near the end of our studies together. Today simply consider that nothing that we have is truly ours. Everything we have and every aspect of our lives is something entrusted to us by our Creator and Redeemer. They are for his use. He is coming back.

Jesus doesn't ask us to use talents that we don't have. The praise given to the man who received five talents is the same as the praise given to the man who received two talents. But he does call us to be faithful. It is well to ask ourselves: Have I used the talents entrusted to me for God's plan and purpose, or my own?



Pray

Make a list of your major assets:

Financial: _____

Property: _____

Personal relationships: _____

Natural abilities: _____

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to consider how you might use those assets to further his desire that all people be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.



Week 2 – Partners Who Understand the Time

Devotion for Day 11 – Wednesday, September 26th Did You See Jesus?



The Word: Matthew 25:31-46

[Jesus' sermon on the end times continues,] "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

“He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”



Meditate

Did you see Jesus today?

As Jesus closes his discussion about the end of the world, he invites us to open our eyes and see him. He is there in the hungry, the imprisoned, the sick, the hurting and the needy. He is there in the small child that we serve. He is there in the elderly parent. He is there in your spouse and your children. He is there in your brothers and sisters at church. Did you see him?

The wicked didn't. They were too busy. They were looking out for their own interests.

What about you? Do you sense the end of the world is near? Does the judgment speak to your sinful nature? Does the King's commendation encourage you to keep on serving?



Pray

King Jesus, we acknowledge you as our Creator, our Redeemer and our Judge. Forgive us for failing to see you in the people who need help around us. Forgive us for the time we have said “no” when it was in our power to say “yes.” As the end of the world draws near, change my heart and the heart of my fellow Christians so that the Church will once again be known as the place where anyone can come to for help. Amen.



Week 2 – Partners Who Understand the Time

Devotion for Day 12 – Thursday, Sept. 27th How Shall We Use Our Time?



The Word

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mark 16:15-16

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”



Meditate

The task is too big!

That’s the excuse that I sometimes use when I am procrastinating. The task is so big that I don’t even want to start.

The task was too big for the apostles. Just a small group gathered in Galilee received the commission to make disciples of all nations. How could they do so great a task?

They just started! They trusted Jesus’ promise to be with them. They knew that people’s eternal destiny was at stake. They knew that Jesus was coming back soon. So they seized opportunities that God gave. They looked for more. They risked life and limb. They gave generously. They lived for this goal – that more people would believe in Jesus and be saved.

We too know that Jesus is coming back soon. We too know that Jesus is our partner in this our gospel work. Everything depends on people knowing Jesus as their Savior. Live to that end. Dedicate your life so that others can live forever.



Pray

Lord Jesus, the population of the world continues to grow. There are more people to reach than ever before. More doors are opening for gospel work. The devil tells us the task is too big. Guilt threatens to overwhelm us because of all that is not being done that could be done. Give us faith to hold on to the truth that we are saints through the forgiveness you have won for us on the cross. Be with us. Work in us that dedication that you desire. Use us so that more people will be in heaven some day. Amen.



Week 2 – Partners Who Understand the Time

Devotion for Day 13 – Friday, Sept. 28th Look Forward to a Reunion



The Word: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen sleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.



Meditate

What a great reunion we have to look forward to! The dead in Christ will be the first to rise on the last day. We shall see them again! Their future and our future are certain.

For some, the day of the Lord will catch them by surprise. But you know that the end of the world is near. Therefore one of the tasks at hand is to encourage one another. Encourage one another to put on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. Our goal is not simply to have more people hearing the Word in church, but that they are armed with the Word of God so that they remain faithful to Christ until they die.

Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.



Pray

Lord Jesus, use me to comfort those whose loved ones have died. Help me remember that you are coming soon, and we shall see them again. May no one in my area of influence be caught unprepared for your return. Amen.



Week 2 – Partners Who Understand the Time

Devotion for Day 14– Saturday, Sept. 29th Speed the Coming of the Day!



The Word: 2 Peter 3:3-13

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.



Meditate

As the era of the apostles was coming to an end, people were asking, “Where is this ‘coming’ Jesus promised? By the time Peter wrote this, it had probably been 35 years since Jesus ascended. Now it has been nearly 2000 years, and the church still lives with the question, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?”

But our time clock is not God’s. What seems to be a long time to us may seem like just a moment to God. What seems to last just a fleeting moment in our minds is like an eternity to God. The longer we live, the more we can understand that time is relative. For a child, a year is a long time. But ask an octogenarian and she will tell you that years fly by.

God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11). He is not in a hurry to bring to an end the world’s time to repent. But the end will come. Everything in this world will be burned with fire. The only “thing” that will last into eternity are the people who believe in Jesus. So every possession is only a tool to accomplish our ultimate goal – to lead more to repentance. Now is the time – by deed and word – to bring the love of Christ to those around us!



Pray

Father, help me to see that everything is going to be burned up. Keep me from focusing on the advantages I can get in this life. Instead, help me to focus on leading others to know your Son. Amen.



Small Group Session Two

Partners Who Understand the Time



CONNECT TOGETHER – 10 MINUTES

Imagine that your house is on fire and everyone is safe. You have thirty seconds to run through the house and collect the four articles you want to save. What would you grab?



GROW TOGETHER – 40 MINUTES

This week our message and our daily devotions remind us that Jesus is coming back soon. Our time is short.



Discussion Question #1: What did you learn about the things that you value from the “Connect Together” exercise?

Read together this week’s memory verse: *“This gospel will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come”* (Matthew 24:14).

As you read the following article, consider how Jesus’ return effects your view of the world. Highlight or underline significant points that you would like to discuss after the reading.

The Christian Life and the Hope of Eternal Life

In his sermon on the Christian hope Luther describes Christians as waiting in this life for the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Last Day... As believers of the Old Covenant awaited the promised appearance of Christ in the flesh, so the believers of the New Testament await the promised second coming of their Lord. Not only when they approach death, but from the moment they become Christians and thus came into possession of their eternal inheritance in

heaven they are looking forward to the day when their Savior will return visibly and take them with him into eternal glory. That view characterizes the entire life of a Christian....

Every phase of the Christian life, all its activities, and all its sorrows are brought into the light of Judgment Day and the glory then to be revealed. Because they are waiting for their Lord, Christians are diligent in good works (Matthew 24:45-51; 25:14ff; Luke 12:15ff), especially the preaching of the Gospel (Matthew 24:14). They keep themselves unspotted from the world (Titus 2:12-14). They guard against the carnal [sinful] security which characterized the time of Noah (Matthew 24:36ff). They remain strangers and pilgrims in this world (1 Peter 3:11; Hebrews 13:14). They use this world without abusing it (1 Corinthians 7:31). They do not seek revenge, but leave that to the coming of the Lord (Philippians 4:5). They are like the wise virgins whose lamps are filled (Matthew 25:1ff). They regard the sufferings of this present time as light (Romans 8:18), so light that instead of weeping they rejoice (Romans 8:18; Luke 6:23; Matthew 5:12; 1 Peter 4:12). They are confident in the midst of death (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). In short, it is the blessed hope of heaven which shapes a Christian's life on earth into the right form. This hope insures the happy life of a Christian; this is the key to a successful ministry.

True, Scripture at times turns the eyes of Christians toward a blessed death (Philippians 1:21-23; Luke 23:43). But primarily and finally the life of every Christian should get its bearing from the dawning of Christ's return.



Discussion Question #2: Why is it significant that the Bible doesn't focus our thoughts primarily on our own death, but on Jesus' return?

Discussion Question #3: In your own words, describe how the knowledge of Jesus' return has changed your life.


Discussion Question #4: The author claims a proper understanding of Jesus' return is "the key to a successful ministry." He was referring to a pastor's ministry. Is also the key to a successful lay person's ministry? If so, in what way?

Luther made this view the theme of his sermon on "the blessed hope." Luther calls it "the fine art and true masterpiece of Christianity" for the believer to "turn his back on this transient life and keep his gaze fixed on the future life, firmly and confidently hoping that it will endure forever and be our proper home."

Luther reminds us that it is difficult to put this article of faith into practice: "This is correctly taught, but not easily learned; rightly preached, but not so soon believed; correctly impressed upon the heart, but not easily followed; well said, but poorly practiced... Were we to confess the truth, we would have to admit that we seldom think of the fact that we must at last depart and leave this life; and for that reason our mind is not constantly set on our eternal home. Add to that our faintheartedness; we always stand in fear of death, we mourn and tremble under our misfortune. All of this shows that we do not look for the blessed hope as we should."

But every Christian needs to learn this article: “Whoever does not direct and prepare his heart for yonder imperishable life, does not understand what Baptism, Gospel, Christ, faith, mean. We have not been baptized into this life; we are not called Christians in order that we might be peasants, masters, servants, mistresses, maids, rulers, subjects, laborers, householders. But for this we are baptized, for this we hear the Gospel and believe in Christ, that we may set aside these vocations (though we abide in these vocations here on earth as long as it pleases God and therein serve God, each one in his appointed calling) and turn from this world to another existence and life where there is neither servant nor master, neither maid nor mistress, neither wife nor husband, but where we are altogether equal and one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28), which equality begins here in faith, but yonder is perfect in sight (1 Corinthians 15:53), where there is no death, but only eternal and imperishable life, no sin, but only righteousness and innocence, no fear nor sorrow, but only security and joy, no dominion nor authority nor power, but God alone will be All in All; in short, where God and Christ Himself is with all His elect and saints. Unto this eternal life we have been baptized, unto this life Christ has redeemed us by his blood and death, and to reach this life we have received the Gospel. As soon as the child is baptized and clothed in the baptismal gown, he is from that hour dedicated unto eternal life, so that henceforth throughout his life he is only pilgrim and stranger in this world, prepared and ready to leave this temporal life, always hoping and looking for yonder enduring life.” (St. Louis edition, IX:930ff.)

From *Christian Dogmatics*, Volume 3, pages 84-86, by Dr. Francis Pieper

 **Discussion Question #5: Do you agree with Dr. Luther’s statement that the article about Jesus’ return is “correctly taught but not easily learned”? Explain your reason for agreeing or disagreeing.**

Discussion Question #6: Discuss how you can help those in your area of influence to live with Jesus’ return always in mind.

Read together the following short biography of William Carey.



The Father of Modern Missions

***Expect Great Things from God
Attempt Great Things for God***

Shoemaker by trade, but scholar, linguist and missionary by God's training," William Carey (1761-1834) was one of God's giants in the history of evangelism! One of his biographers... wrote of him, "Taking his life as a whole, it is not too much to say that he was the greatest and most versatile Christian missionary sent out in modern times."

It was in Moulton [England, where Carey was pastor of a small Baptist congregation] that Carey heard the missionary call. In his own words, “My attention to missions was first awakened after I was at Moulton, by reading the *Last Voyage of Captain Cook*.” To many, *Cook’s Journal* was a thrilling story of adventure, but to Carey it was a revelation of human need! He then began to read every book that had any bearing on the subject.

The more he read and studied, the more convinced he was “the peoples of the world need Christ.” He read, he made notes, he made a great leather globe of the world and, one day, in the quietness of his cobbler’s shop — not in some enthusiastic missionary conference — Carey heard the call: “If it be the duty of all men to believe the Gospel ... then it be the duty of those who are entrusted with the Gospel to endeavor to make it known among all nations.” And Carey sobbed out, “*Here am I; send me!*”

To surrender was one thing — to get to the field was quite another problem. There were no missionary societies and there was no real missionary interest. When Carey propounded this subject for discussion at a ministers’ meeting, “Whether the command given to the apostles to teach all nations was not obligatory on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent,” Dr. Ryland shouted, “Young man, sit down: when God pleases to covert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine.”

But Carey persisted. He later said of his ministry, “I can plod!” And he was a man who “always resolutely determined never to give up on any point or particle of anything on which his mind was set until he had arrived at a clear knowledge of his subject.”

Thus Carey wrote his famed *Enquiry Into the Obligations of the Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*. In this masterpiece on missions Carey answered arguments, surveyed the history of missions from apostolic times, surveyed the entire known world as to countries, size, population and religions, and dealt with the practical application of how to reach the world for Christ!

And he prayed. And he pled. And he plodded. And he persisted. And he preached — especially his epoch-producing message, “EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD. ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD.” The result of that message preached at Nottingham, May 30, 1792 — and all the other missionary ministries of Carey — produced the particular Baptist Missionary Society, formed that Fall at Kettering on October 2, 1792. A subscription was started and, ironically, Carey could not contribute any money toward it except the pledge of the profit from his book, *The Enquiry*.

It was in 1793 that Carey went to India. At first his wife was reluctant to go — so Carey set off to go nevertheless, but after two returns from the docks to persuade her again, Dorothy and his children accompanied him. They arrived with a Dr. Thomas at the mouth of the Hooghly in India in November, 1793. There were years of discouragement (no Indian convert for seven years), debt, disease, deterioration of his wife’s mind, death, but by the grace of God — and by the power of the Word — Carey continued and conquered for Christ!

When he died at 73 (1834), he had seen the Scriptures translated and printed into forty languages, he had been a college professor, and had founded a college at Serampore. He had

seen India open its doors to missionaries, he had seen the edict passed prohibiting *sati* (burning widows on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands), and he had seen converts for Christ.

On his deathbed Carey called out to a missionary friend, “Dr. Duff! You have been speaking about Dr. Carey; when I am gone, say nothing about Dr. Carey — speak about Dr. Carey's God.” That charge was symbolic of Carey, considered by many to be a “unique figure, towering above both contemporaries and successors” in the ministry of missions.

(from *Profiles in Evangelism* by Fred Barlow, Sword of the Lord Publishers, ©1976)



Discussion Question #7: What inspired you as you read William Carey's biography?

Discussion Question #8: What lessons can you learn about your personal efforts to bring the people in your area of influence closer to Christ by

- **Carey's reaction to Last Voyage of Captain Cook (Has something influenced you in a similar way?)**
- **Carey's persistence in the face of opposition**
- **Carey's personal hardships**
- **Carey's lack of a convert for seven years**



SERVE TOGETHER – 10 MINUTES

1. Choose a ministry project that your small group can do together. At St. Paul's some ideas would include:
 - a. Serving an Advent or Lent soup supper (call Ron Bartelt 262-679-1657 to reserve a date)
 - b. Serving as hosts for a new member welcome (call Randy Fink at 414-422-0320 ext. 120)
 - c. Serving as greeters on a weekend (call Jodie Crosby at 414-427-0922)
 - d. Adopting a family in need in the congregation to provide Thanksgiving or Christmas food/gifts (call Bob Garbe at 414-422-0320, ext. 123)
 - e. Providing treats for our school staffs (School of Early Learning staff meets once per month on Monday evening – Call Lou Drobka, SOEL secretary at 414-422-0320, ext. 200; Lutheran Elementary School staff meets twice per month on a Monday afternoon – Call School secretary Jody Lunow at 414-422-0320, ext. 110)

Assign one member of your group to be the coordinator for your ministry project.

2. If you haven't already done so, divide up the duties of hosting among the group for your last four meetings.

Date	Host Home	Snack Provider	Facilitator



SHARE TOGETHER – 15 MINUTES

1. Last week, you committed to praying for one or more individuals who perhaps don't know Christ at all or are struggling in their Christian faith. Share with the group any answer to that prayer or any further prayer request concerning those individuals.

Take note of prayer requests here:

2. Your group is encouraged to do a mission project together. Please consider participating in the ***Family Saturday*** at Gethsemane Lutheran. See the note below for more information. Projects include:
 - a. Set up
 - b. Take down
 - c. Food preparation (Coordinator Crystal Bourdo 262-679-1485)
 - d. Food service (Coordinator Crystal Bourdo 262-679-1485)
 - e. Child care
 - f. Aids for teaching art to children
 - g. Teaching a Bible lesson to children
 - h. Publicity (two or more groups going out with Gethsemane members sometime before the Family Saturday)

Please contact Dan Beck at 262-679-2256 or Pastor Panitzke at 414-422-0320 ext. 122 for more information about the program as a whole.

3. Gather a special offering for ***Family Saturday***. Your group may wish to adopt in whole or in part one of the following opportunities to show Christian love both to our brothers and sisters in Christ at Gethsemane and to the community around their church:
 - a. Radio advertisements (approximate cost \$500)
 - b. Printing of flyers for distribution in the community (\$500)
 - c. Cost of the food that is not donated (\$100)
 - d. Scholarships for participants in the “how to start a business” presentation. The instructor of that session teaches an in-depth, multi-week course that costs \$1000. If participants complete the course and submit a workable business plan, the cost is reduced to \$250. The leadership at Gethsemane would like to provide one or more scholarships (\$100 to \$250) to the best business plan(s) presented by participants in our *Family Saturday*.
 - e. Gifts to offset costs associated with our *Partners in the Gospel* program.

Through November 12th, we will have a “Partners in the Gospel” lock box in the narthex and in the church office for small group leaders and others to drop off donations.



***Our Partnership in the Gospel with Gethsemane Lutheran
Family Saturday, 9:30 to 12:30, Saturday November 10***

St. Paul's has been strengthening our partnership with Gethsemane Lutheran Church, 2827 Harrison Avenue on the southside of Milwaukee for several years as it reaches out to the Hispanic population. As part of our ***Partners in the Gospel*** program, we will provide the manpower and financial assistance to make a ***Family Saturday*** possible. Presentations for the community will include child-discipline, internet safety, family health, buying your first home and starting a business. Small groups will have an opportunity to help with publicity, provide childcare, teach a Bible lesson to children, teach art and/or music and provide food and refreshments. Discuss today if your group would be able to serve. Assign one of your group to be the Mission Project Coordinator for your group to contact Dan Beck at 262-679-2256 to inform him of your project or for more information.



WORSHIP TOGETHER – 10 MINUTES

Ask for prayer requests and make note of them below.

Group member's name	Prayer Request	Person for whom to pray

Let each group member offer simple, one-sentence prayers. If a person doesn't feel comfortable doing so, just say, "pass."

Close by reading together the following prayer:

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus....And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. Amen. (Philippians 1:3-6, 9-11)