

THE FOUR FACES OF MISSIONS

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JN 20:19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

JN 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

JN 20:24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

JN 20:26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."^{JN 20:28} Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

In these inspirational verses in John 20 we see the disciples in the Upper Room with the 'doors locked for fear of the Jews...'. Easter has already occurred, but why are they still afraid 'after Easter? Hasn't the Lord risen? Hasn't death been defeated? Why be afraid when all that men can do is kill you? They fear for the same reasons we are afraid. They have seen death take their dearest friend. To be sure, they have heard that He is alive, and some of their group say He is alive. But they don't truly believe. They haven't seen Him alive after that brutal crucifixion. To believe, to lose that fear, they must see Him for themselves. So, in this Upper Room, one week after the Resurrection and Appearances, they too see Him. He comes to them and says "Peace be with you." Then he showed them His hand and His feet and they know that it is Him and they are filled with joy. Then: JN 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." John records the very first visit of the Risen Lord with His disciples in the Upper Room where He bequeaths PEACE upon them; but then, Jesus adds that, like Him, they must be missionaries. He gives them peace, but it is peace with a command. It is a command to be Missionaries. I call this sermon the Face of Missions and the first Face of Missions is Peace. The Angel said of His first Visit: LK 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Jesus spoke about Peace many times. Perhaps that is why His familiar greeting

was so revealing of Himself to them.

PEACE--MT 10:¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you.

LK 7:⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

LK 7:⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

LK 7:⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

JN. 14:²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

JN 16:³³ "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

The disciples also spoke about the Peace of God:

ACTS10:³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

RO 5:¹ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

ROM 14:¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

^{2CO 1:2} Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GAL 5:²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control.

The deepest want of man is not a desire for happiness, but a craving for peace; not a wish for the gratification of every desire, but a craving for the repose of acquiescence in the will of God: and it is this which Christianity promises. Christianity does not promise happiness, but it does promise peace.

A story is told by William Gilbert of how Dante, wandering one day over the mountains of Lunigiana, eventually drew near to a lone, secluded monastery. It was at a time when his mind was wracked with internal conflict and was seeking refuge from the strife. So he loudly knocked at the monastery gate. It was opened by a monk, who in a single glance at the sad, pale face, read its pathetic message of misery and sorrow. "What do you seek here?" said he. With a gesture of despair, the poet replied, "Peace." It was the same old craving followed by the same old search. But neither the solitary places, nor the anchorite's cell ever brought true peace to the afflicted heart. Peace comes not from without but from within. We can have it in the winter of age or the spring of youth; in the lowly cottage or the stately mansion; in distressing pain or in buoyant health. The secret of it is in comradeship with Christ. You can have peace in the midst of the storm, if you have Christ.

He is the shelter from the tempest, the soul's haven of rest. If we have learned to value His friendship, we have mastered the secret of the "peace which passeth all understanding."
Swindoll

The Christian who follows Christ is a Messenger of Peace. Whether he goes to a home near the church or whether he goes somewhere around the world, he proclaims the 'peace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We have received the Peace of God. Therefore the first face of missions is your face and mine, filled with the peace of God. The first face of missions is the face of one that we lead to know Christ as Savior and Lord. Christ conditioned His Peace on Discipleship, and whenever we follow Him in Missions we have peace and we become channels of peace.

THE SECOND FACE OF MISSIONS IS POWER--²² "And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit"

How simple that statement sounds, but how profound that truth really is. We need power to confront life, power to engage others, power to stand in the face of criticism and misunderstanding, power to live life and to receive the many blows that life brings to us. Many of us are like the Sadducee who asked Jesus the ridiculous question about the woman marrying the various brothers who died, to preserve their seed. Whose wife would she be in heaven. ^{MT 22:29} Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

LK 4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

AC 1:7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

ACTS 4:22 WITH great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

AC 6:8 Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.

RO 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

RO 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 COR. 1:2 Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

EPH 3: ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

COL 1:11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

11 "Being strengthened with all power" expresses a third element in the life pleasing to God. Christians are engaged in moral conflict with the cosmic powers of a darkened world (cf. Eph 6:12), and nothing short of divine empowerment can enable them to stand.

"Strengthened," which speaks of continuous empowerment, translates the same root word

This empowerment is "according to his [God's] glorious might." That is to say, it is not proportioned simply to our need, but to God's abundant supply. The Greek behind the phrase "his glorious might" (*to kratos tes doxes autou*) is more literally rendered "the might of his glory." Though NIV represents a legitimate interpretation, possibly we should retain the literal rendering and understand the thought to be *the might of God's own manifested nature*. In this interpretation "glory" (*doxes*) stands for the revealed splendor or majesty of God--the sum total of his divine perfections. (Paul uses the word *glory* more than seventy times in his Epistles. Its basic meaning is physical brightness or radiance, but its exact meaning must be determined by its various contexts. In Romans 6:4 Christ is said to have been "raised from the dead through the glory of the Father.")

John Henry Jowett has beautifully expressed what characterizes the life of power.

"Another element in a forceful character is heat, the fire of an unquenchable enthusiasm. . . . The Acts of the Apostles is a burning book. There is no cold or lukewarm patch from end to end. The disciples had been baptized with fire, with the holy, glowing enthusiasm caught from the altar of God. They had this central fire from which every other purpose and faculty in the life gets its strength. This fire in the apostles' souls was like a furnace-fire in a great liner, which drives her through the tempests and through the envious and engulfing deep. Nothing could stop these men. Nothing could hinder their going. 'We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard. We must obey God rather than men.' This strong imperative rings throughout all their doings and all their speech. They have heat, and they have light, because they were baptized by the power of the Holy Ghost."

Jesus promises us His own power for the mission. Listen: ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

THE THIRD FACE OF MISSIONS IS HIS PRESENCE--²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Jesus assured His disciples of His Presence many times. In Matt 28, He said, : "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." The Presence of Jesus is absolutely essential to anything the Christian tries to do for the Lord. When we go ahead of Jesus we are found to foul things up; when we go behind Jesus we are bound to get nothing done. We must go with our Lord, and when we are with Him our 'hearts burn within us. The New Testament speaks much about His Presence: ^{MK 7:24} Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret.

He showed Himself to His disciples, according to Luke : ^{LK 24:40} When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

JN 20:30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

^{2CO 4:13} It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.

1 THES 2:¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

JUDE 1:²⁴ To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy-- ²⁵ to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!

MATT 28:¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

BEST ILLUSTRATION--EMMAUS ROAD DISCIPLES.

THE FACE OF PEACE, THE FACE OF POWER, THE FACE OF HIS PRESENCE,
AND LAST OF ALL, PRINCIPLE--JN 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

We are reminded of that principle when we read these words in our text. ^{JN 20:28} Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" You see, we are confronted with an absolute that we cannot do anything about but do what God wills. If Jesus is Lord, we have no option but to believe what He says and to do what He commands. Someone wisely said, "The only part of the Bible you truly believe is the part you obey."

Since he himself was in authority, the centurion knew that obedience was the rule of authority. We find these words in Scripture.^{MT 8:13} Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour.

To the doubters and critics watching Him, he said, MT. 9:⁶ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." ⁷ And the man got up and went home.

He commanded His disciples MT. 10: ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

To the disciples He had gotten out of prison, He commanded, ACTS 5:²⁰ "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

^{AC 5:21} At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

To Paul lying on the Damascus Road, He said, ^{AC 9:5} "Who are you, Lord?" Saul

asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Then to Ananias, He said, ^{AC 9:15} But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

To Simon Peter at the house of Simon the tanner, he said, go! ^{AC 10:19} While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

Paul testified that He said to Him, ^{AC 22:21} "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "

The writer of Hebrews enforces this: ^{HEB 11:8} By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

^{HEB. 13:13} Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴ For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

The fourth face of Missions is Principle--As the Father hath sent me, so send I you! We cannot get around that. Our world is rapidly becoming atheistic and Islamic. Someone wrote: 'every Muslim regards himself as a missionary; the majority of Christians think it is another man's work.' " The Principle is Command--that is the Lord's Principle. Our Principle is Obedience. Phillipps Brooks writes: "Sometimes He (the Lord) seems to gather up His fullest declaration of this vital connection of man with God and call it in one mighty word, Obedience. You must obey God, and so live by Him.

--Phillips Brooks

Obedience must be the struggle and desire of our life. Obedience, not hard and forced, but ready, loving and spontaneous; the doing of duty, not merely that the duty may be done, but that the soul in doing it may become capable of receiving and uttering God.

--Phillips Brooks

Around the turn of this century, Annie Armstrong looked out of the bay window in her Philadelphia apartment and saw thousands of European immigrants streaming in from abroad. The experience of seeing all of these people led her to write in her diary. She noted there are two ways of winning the world: One is to go abroad and evangelize them. The second is to win them when they come to America. She sensed God's leadership to attempt the latter and became instrumental in establishing "Home Missions." Today, immigrants continue to seek the vast opportunities America has to offer. Our potential for global missions is far greater than it was during the time of Annie Armstrong. May we seize the moment and win those who are coming to America.

* A Missions People: The Southern Baptist Pilgrimage, M. Wendell Belew, 1989, p. 189-190

In Chicago a whole river is turned green on St. Patrick's Day, but that hardly represents the significance of the man after whom the day is named. Patrick was a Scottish boy born in A.D. 389. He was the grandson of Christian landowners. Some Irish raiders invaded his homeland and took him as a prisoner. Patrick became an Irish slave for the next six years of his life. He later escaped and fled to a monastery on the southern coast of France. In 432 he was ordained as a missionary bishop and returned to Ireland. He preached throughout the land and was so successful that Ireland became known as the Isle of Saints. Patrick's unique contribution to the cause of Christ was his missionary strategy of sending missionaries from Ireland to other countries. St. Patrick turned converts into converters.

* A Missions People: the Southern Baptist Pilgrimage, M. Wendell Belew, 1989, p. 66

A preacher once said, "Brethren, whatever the good Lord tells me to do in the Bible, that's what I'm going to do. If He says I must jump through a stone wall, I'm going to jump at it. Going through it belongs to God--jumping at it belongs to me."

--From Best Sermon Illustrations by J. G. Lawson

Four Faces of Missions--Peace, Power, Presence, and Principle. These four faces of mission were present in the Face Jesus. As Christians we have no choice but to go, and to go with His peace and power. As we go we will have that peace and power, and we will have the Presence of the Son of God with us on our journey. His word of command is the only principle we need.