



Title: A Missionary's Song

Introduction: *Psalm 67 is what could be called a "Missionary Song."* (The Expositors Bible Commentary; The Treasury of David; The Pulpit Commentary; Psalm 67:2) The truths in this song are what should be in the heart of those who either want to be a missionary or be involved in missions. Christians long to see peoples from all nations participating in the privileges that come to those who live a life of praise to Jesus Christ.

"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine upon us, ^{Ps 67:2} that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. ^{Ps 67:3} May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. ^{Ps 67:4} May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth. ^{Ps 67:5} May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. ^{Ps 67:6} Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God, will bless us. ^{Ps 67:7} God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear Him." (Psalm 67:1-7) Pray!

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Just what is requested in this song of prayer and why are they so beneficial to the lost and the Body of Christ?

I would propose to you that Psalm 67 is from the heart of God, being expressed to His children to what has real importance in regard to eternity. This song is a prayer for God's blessings, His Salvation to include all nations, His righteous rule and His declaration of blessings to the ends of the earth.

The Bible has a truth that should be proclaimed often in the house of God

The first heart cry of this missionary song is, "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine upon us,"

All Scripture is brought forth by the Holy Spirit and God wants us to grasp a truth here. God is the source of all benefits. The Holy Spirit moved the writer and is moving us to ask the Lord to be gracious, to bless and show his love upon us. It is the blessings of God that make life on this earth enjoyable. Jesus intervenes on the behalf of the child of God and enables him to accomplish God's will in this sinned cursed world. God delights in those who seek Him. (The Expositors Bible Commentary)

The Bible has a truth that should be proclaimed often in the house of God, especially in the benediction. It is the speaking forth of a blessing found in Numbers 6:24-27. It is often called the “Priestly Blessing.” The Lord told Moses to tell Aaron to bless His people with these Words, ““The LORD bless you and keep you; ^{Nu 6:25} the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ^{Nu 6:26} the LORD turn His face toward you and give you peace.’ ^{Nu 6:27} So they will put My name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

The heart of the seeker that moves God is the Christian who ask the Lord to “be gracious.” “Gracious” (*hanan*) meaning to “have mercy on me!” (The Complete Word Dictionary, Old Testament) God’s forgiveness of sin is to be sought foremost and that brings a chain of blessings upon the repentant Christian. This heart reflects a death to legal works or claims of merit. It is a heart resting totally on the favor of God given in Christ’ Name.

Verse one of Psalm 67 holds a key truth of a missionary’s heart, may the Lord “make His face shine upon us.” Often in the Scriptures we read this phrase, which is a prayer or blessing spoken. What does it mean? It is an invocation of the Lord’s presence and favor. While those who live outside of the will of God seek to find their happiness in wealth, ambition, in this world’s pleasures and sensual delights – the child of God finds his happiness in service to the Lord and in friendship with God. (Barnes Notes) The psalmist is asking for God’s revelation and presence just as Moses received.

The heart of the missionary goes beyond earthly blessings to a hunger for God and a desiring for Christ-likeness. The apostle Paul said God’s goal for Christians is to “...become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:13; Dr. Jim Berg; Matthew Henry) The child of God will always be maturing down here on this earth, therefore he needs to be daily praying, “Lord mold me and make me what you want me to be.”

Lorica of Saint Patrick had a great prayer that reflects the heart of a missionary who wants to touch the lives of others for the sake of Christ. His heart’s desire was, “Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me, Christ in the eyes that see me and Christ in the ear that hears me.” (Sermon Central)

Christians often sing “Jesus be Jesus in Me,” this song reflects the first and utmost truth found in the opening verse of Psalm 67. God’s greatest desire is that the Children of God become Christ-like, in thought, speech and life.

The New American Standard Bible says this about the priestly blessing that is to be spoken upon the people of God, “The Lord lift His countenance on you and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:26 NAS)

The heart of a missionary and mission's based church will be seeking the Lord's blessings, peace, a noble countenance that expresses love for the Lord and a life bound by the grace of God. They are Christians that long for God's ways and salvation to be made known throughout the earth.

Ignorance of the Lord Jesus is the great enemy of mankind

Ignorance of the Lord Jesus is the great enemy of mankind. Just as showers first fall upon the foothills of the Colorado Rockies then afterwards run down in streams into the valleys, so the blessings of God come upon those who live in this world through His church. God calls sinners unto Christ and then sends them out to make known far and wide the Lord's saving grace. This is the method of sharing the message of mercy to mankind. It is a duty and privilege of the revived children of God to make the message of salvation known everywhere while at the same time being totally dependant upon the God of the universe to open the door of people's hearts.

Let the Holy Spirit put in your heart the will of God found in Psalm 67:2, “that [God's] ways may be known on earth, [His] salvation among all nations.” (Psalm 67:2) There are two things that are found in a missionary's prayer song.

One, that God's ways be made known to all of mankind, that they may know how to live in a way that is God and Christ honoring. The church with a missionary' heart has the heart of King David, the man after God's own heart. (Acts 13:22) David so longed for his son, Solomon to know and walk in the ways of God. Listen to David's charge to his own son, “When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. ^{1Ki 2:2} ‘I am about to go the way of all the earth,’ he said. ‘So be strong, show yourself a man, ^{1Ki 2:3} and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in His ways, and keep His decrees and commands, His laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go...’” (1 Kings 2:1-3)

David's last charge to Solomon most certainly dealt with his son's spiritual life. However, the basic instruction was that Solomon should conduct himself in his personal life, and in his role as leader of God's people, in accordance to the Word of God. All missionary minded people have this same heart cry. That everyone they speak to will seek to understand the ways of God so they may be blessed with God's righteous statutes and decrees. To know them is to come to know the heart of God and Christ Jesus.

The second thing in the heart of a missionary song is that God's salvation found in Jesus Christ be made known among all nations. It is not that the people in America have their God and other nations have their gods. But that people of all tribes, nations and tongues have the opportunity to choose this very day the god of whom they are going to serve. This is the very heart cry of the apostle Paul found in the Book of Romans and is the same heart of all involved in missions. (Barnes Notes; Matthew Henry; F.F. Bruce; John Wesley notes)

Romans 10:14-15 says, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

In Romans chapter 10 the Apostle Paul is dealing with Israel's unbelief. He is saying if someone had not been sent to preach to them, there would be no way for them to believe. Time and time again God sent prophets to preach the message of good news to the repentant. Paul writes, "Of course they [heard]." (Romans 10:18) He also writes of his heart's desire in Romans 10:1 saying his "...prayer to God is for the Israelites..." to be saved. The Holy Spirit informs us through the writings of the Apostle Paul that, "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13)

Therefore, Romans 10:14-15 in its application to the church today shows forth the necessity of proclaiming the gospel worldwide. Men, women, and children are to be urged to ask Jesus to come into their hearts and lives to be both Savior and Lord. Sinners cannot believe unless they hear about Jesus Christ. They cannot hear unless someone takes the good news to them. All believers in Christ have been "Commissioned" to fulfill their part in reaching out to a lost and dying in their home town and around the world." (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

Before someone can call upon the Name of the Lord there must be faith, so before faith there must be hearing, before hearing there must be preaching, and before preaching there must be someone surrendered to God's "Commission." This takes a team.

Character traits that are evident in a mission's based church

All through Scripture we see God using people who are sold out to His purposes and there are character traits that are evident in a mission's based church. The mission-based church will have prayer warriors.

Missionaries must be blanketed in prayer. Paul writes about the importance and power of prayer warriors. In 2 Corinthians we read of Paul thanking the Corinthians for their prayers and he encourages them to continue to pray because their petitions to the Lord are powerful and effective. He writes, “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹ Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, ¹¹ as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.” (2 Corinthians 1:8-11)

James Gilmore was a foreign missionary and he said, “Mission work could not succeed without prayer by God’s children in the homeland. Un-prayed for, I feel like a diver on the bottom of the river with no connecting line to the surface and no air to breath; or like a fireman with an empty hose on a burning building. With prayer, I feel like David facing Goliath!”

Walter B. Knight wrote about a lady who was sweeping the floor of her Canadian home when a powerful move of the Holy Spirit urged her to pray for her close missionary friends in Africa. She had a feeling that they may be in great danger. She prayed earnestly until she sensed the Lord’s pleasure. Then she documented this in her prayer journal.

Later when she had made contact with her missionary friends in Africa, they shared with her about a night when the wife awoke suddenly with a fear that they were in great danger. The moon rays were bright that night and she could see nothing wrong in the room, yet she still felt that they were still immediate danger. She quietly woke her husband and they whispered about her fears. As the husband began to move, that which was hidden by his shadow was now exposed by the moonlight. A very large cobra was in the room with them, and the husband was able to grab his gun and do away with their potentially deadly enemy. The incident was recorded in their missionary journal.

Months later as the missionary couple and the Canadian housewife began to compare notes they were amazed how the two experiences happened on the same date and comparably at the same time. The peril of the missionaries happened at the same time their friend was moved to pray for their safety.

Missionaries and missions are protected and provided for through the prayers offered in Jesus’ Name by loyal Christians to an all-loving God. They are also provided for by practical means.

The word “missions” comes from a Latin word (*mitto*) denoting a task that a person or group has been assigned, usually by God or God’s representatives, and sent out to perform. In the New Testament, missions refers to the ministry of the Gospel, in word and in deed. Paul was fulfilling a God-given task during his three mission trips. The church in Antioch was very much fulfilling the Lord’s task in sending Barnabas and Paul out with famine relief to the needy. Missions were being fulfilled in Peter’s Commission to preach the gospel to the Jews. (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

The Lord uses different ways and works through whomever He wishes to provide for the task He has assigned. He is in absolute control of everything and every heart. His provision for His work has come through Christians and non-Christians all through history. Many places in the Bible proclaim this truth. One such incident is found in the book of Ezra chapter one.

This passage of Scripture records the event of God moving upon a king’s heart – Cyrus, king of Persia - to provide for the supplies and the man power needed to rebuild the temple of God in Jerusalem. There is little indication that Cyrus actually became a true follower of God. (Who’s Who in the Bible; The Pulpit Commentary) What is most important is the fact that in fulfillment to the Word of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah, “...the Lord moved on the heart of King Cyrus...” to make the way for the rebuilding of the temple. (Ezra 1: 2-11)

Kings Cyrus receives knowledge of God’s will for him and what the Lord wants to accomplish through him. He makes the proclamation that enables the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites – everyone whose heart God had moved upon – to go up and build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:5)

The Bible teaches because of Ezra’s proclamation that, “All their neighbors assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts, in addition to all the freewill offerings.” (Ezra 1:6) The point the Holy Spirit of God wants us to grasp today is that the Lord uses people in positions that He has put them in, rather kingship or common worker, for the purpose of providing for His works upon this earth. Thus, we are to be responsive to the Holy Spirit’s prompting and provide in practical ways with what means the Lord has made available to us.

Many have come to know the joy of meeting the needs of missionaries in practical ways. They have given sacrificially, gone into the mission field to help build a church, a Christian hospital or orphanage with supplies given by their brothers and sister in Christ on the home front. In this nation right now, those in government positions are enabling and encouraging people to give to Christian-based ministries and give them tax breaks for doing so.

Make a plea to God for servants who can preach the gospel

Missions and missionaries are to be provided for in practical ways and the church with a heart of missions will make a plea to God for servants who can preach the gospel. Romans 10:14 says, “And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” It is translated in the New American Standard Bible as, “...And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

“Preacher” (*kerusso*) here means someone who can publicly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and the responsibilities that go with it as it was taught by the apostles and the Christian teachers of the God’s Word. This Christian is one who represents Jesus Christ and he is only to proclaim the message of the Word of God. He is not to add in his own ideas, fads, or worldly philosophies. (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon; The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Bible, New Testament; Practical Word Studies in the New Testament)

The Gospel Herald ran an article entitled “Talks Christ Only.” This article told of story of Pastor Martin Niemoeller who spent six years in a Nazi prison camp. Upon his release, he was approached by reporters, who were hoping to get a juicy story. Instead of getting the story they hoped for, they heard the true gospel. One reporter wrote, ‘Six years in a Nazi prison camp and all he has to talk about is Jesus Christ.’”

Those with a missionary’s heart know that they are to be like the apostle Paul, who wrote, “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20) The church needs missionaries who are focused upon Christ, what He has, can and will do through His obedient Children.

Walter B. Knight wonderfully pointed out that the rich man in hell became a true believer in missions. For his plea was, “Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house,²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ (Luke 16:27-28)

Paul Box, missionary to Malaya shared what the missionary needs most when he wrote, “...missionaries go from daylight to midnight in [difficult circumstances] witnessing for Christ but seeing little response. Sickness strikes many of our homes. Depression sweeps new missionaries. We see need after need that must be filled, and yet often have no immediate answers. Our greatest need is for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit of Christ.” Missionaries need our prayers.

Pastor Edward Pruden did a great job in his message on the importance of being involved in missions. He reminded the congregation that “Every Church is the product of some one’s missionary activity. Every church is a monument to the missionary impulse. Every church should be reminded that it has been set down in the midst of a mission field – whether in the heart of Africa or in the heart of Washington, D.C. Every church should be reminded that it has fallen heir to the Great Commission which Christ gave to His disciples.” (Knight’s Treasury of 2,000 Illustrations)

Our Commission comes from the one who gave His life for the church. He has called many of His dear children out into the mission field. They are like the great missionary of India, William Carey, who said, “I will go down if you hold the ropes.” This is the way it should be. The mental picture is “I will go down into the caves that most people will never go into, but you must hold the ropes. I will go down if you will hold on. I will go if you are here holding fast, holding tight.”

The Missionary’s song, or rather prayer, is, I will go if you hold on to the ropes of prayer and provision and trust in the One who has called me.

Let us pray!