

## Helping Others Build Bridges to Reach the World

### Introduction:

1. We learned that there is a huge gap that exists between mankind and God - it is the gap of sin. Jesus came to bridge that gap through His death on the cross.
2. Last week we learned that God wants to use you to be somebody's bridge to bring him or her to Jesus - your family, friends, and associates.
3. But did you know that if every believer on this planet won everyone in his sphere of influence, there would still be huge gaps? There would still be millions who have never heard about Jesus. There are still gaps all over this world that need a bridge.
  - 1.8 billion people have never been confronted with the good news of Jesus Christ.
  - Organized Christianity has no contact with 500 million people in the world today.
  - There are 11, 643 known people groups and 3,414 are currently unreached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
4. We have a lot of bridge building to do! This is where we must understand the concept of missions. There are gaps that need a bridge. While you can't possibly reach the 1.8 billion people that have never heard of Jesus, you can help other people build bridges to reach those people.
5. Next week we will have four men and their families standing before us, wanting to build bridges to Wales, Ireland, Ivory Coast, and Arctic Siberia. They need our help. They need us to join hands with them.
6. If our lives are to have true meaning and impact, we must be involved in worldwide bridge building by helping others to build bridges. How can we accomplish this?

### First, by understanding the heart of Jesus Christ

1. Our Savior has a heart of compassion - **Matthew 9:36-38**
  - "*Labourers*" would equal the name "missionary." A missionary goes out with hearts of compassion to reach for people for Christ.
2. Our Savior has a heart of grace - **Luke 19:1-10**
3. Our Savior has a heart for all people - **Acts 26:16-18**
  - Christ raised up Paul because He doesn't want anybody excluded.  
**1 Timothy 2:4, 6, 4:10; 2 Peter 3:9**
4. This is Christ's heart, His mission, His vision, and He is calling **you** to be a part of it. Will you join hands with the Savior and accomplish **His** heart's desire?
5. Our existence on this earth is not simply about **us**, and our desires, and our thirst for more material things that will leave you ultimately empty. God's plan for your life is so much more meaningful than this.
6. It is about Jesus Christ and His desire for people to be saved and brought into a right relationship with God through His cross work. You can have a part in this.
7. Jesus is the supreme bridgebuilder and He is looking for people who will help build spiritual bridges in this world.

## **Second, by leaving your comfort zone**

1. I said earlier that God raised up Paul because God's plan was that through Paul all nations might hear of the marvelous work that Christ did on the cross for sin.
  - Paul would later say, *"I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."*  
**Romans 11:13**
2. But here was the problem. The truth of Jesus Christ and His resurrection had never left the boundary of the Jewish community. The twelve apostles had confined their ministry to Israel because they were seeking to convert Israel first, and then through Israel's conversion, the message would eventually go to the other nations.
3. But God had other plans that the twelve didn't know about. God would reveal to Paul special revelation about the cross of Christ and that Christ had made an offering for **all people** on the cross. God would send salvation to all nations **despite** Israel's rebellion.
4. But in order for Paul's ministry to be accepted by the church, God would first send Peter to the house of a Gentile named Cornelius (a good, moral, religious man, but lost). He needed a Savior. **Acts 10:2**
  - To enter into a Gentile's house was not something that would be acceptable or comfortable for Peter. It was against Jewish law and custom.
5. God had to prod Peter out of his comfort zone and eventually Peter did go, and Cornelius and his entire household believed Peter's message about Jesus Christ and were saved.
  - Why is this? Because one man left his comfort zone and went and built a bridge to these people.
6. Did you know that there are Corneliuses all over this world? They just need a bridge.
7. Maybe God wants you to go and be a bridgebuilder somewhere. Maybe God wants you to be more involved in helping others build these bridges through your financial help.
8. Why has God blessed us so much in America, beyond our real need? It is not simply to raise our standard of **living**, but our standard of **giving**.
9. I challenge you to leave your comfort zone and get involved helping to build bridges.

## **Third, by laying aside all prejudice**

1. The dictionary defines "prejudice" as "an attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, or race."
2. This is how the Jews felt about the Samaritans in Bible days. Samaria was located in northern Israel and many of the Jews had married Gentiles. The Jews had racial hatred towards the Samaritans.
3. But Jesus loved the Samaritans. He had reached out to a woman of Samaria during His earthly ministry and also instructed the twelve to eventually do the same.  
**Acts 1:8**
4. As of Acts 8, the message of Christ had not gone to Samaria. Persecution began to hit the church at Jerusalem hard in **Acts 8:1**, but notice the result. vs. 4-5
  - Philip laid aside all prejudice and became a bridge to the Samaritan people.

5. We serve a God who is not prejudiced in any way. He doesn't love Americans more than another people group. He doesn't love one skin color more than another. He equally loves every person in the world and desires for every one to live with Him eternally.
6. If you have a problem with a person because of his skin color, or nationality, or financial status, etc., you have a serious heart infection.
  - Until it is cleared up, you will never be a bridge builder. In fact, you will be a barrier to people coming to Jesus.
7. Did you know that there are people groups right here in Daytona Beach that need to be reached? They need someone who will put aside all prejudice and build a bridge.

**In Conclusion:**

1. Do you desire for your life to have real meaning and impact? Get involved in worldwide bridge building by helping others to build bridges around the world.
2. Next Sunday we will begin our 15th annual Missions Conference that will focus on this issue of stretching ourselves to reach out to the world with the gospel of Christ.
  - Pray.
  - Be faithful to the services of the conference.
  - Ask God to speak to your heart through His Word and show you how you can get more involved.
3. Your life can make a difference in so many other people's lives.