

God reaching out to the world

Reference: SHM-S02-002-Mw-R00-P2

(Originally spoken on 15 October 2006, edited on 7 October 2011)

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Let us draw near to the Lord and appreciate Him, what He has done for us, and also to seek to understand what is in His heart.

Let us turn to **John 10: 14-16**.

John 10: 14-16

- 14 "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,
15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.
16 "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd.

As we appreciate what the Lord has done for each one of us, it is first important for us to establish a personal relationship with God. The Lord Jesus is the good shepherd. He knows His sheep by name. He understands each one of us. He cares for us personally.

The first thing that we need to do is to learn to draw near to Him, to appreciate Him personally and deeply. While God wants us to care for the whole world, He also knows that we cannot properly care for the whole world unless we have properly cared for ourselves.

Unless we know the Lord personally, unless we have found life, unless there is something that we can give to others, what can we contribute, how can we truly help others and contribute to them?

So the first thing is for us, as His sheep, to hear His voice, listen to Him, draw near to Him.

Then as we appreciate what He has done for us, we become more conscious that there are others around us who love God and we begin to appreciate our place together in the body of Christ. We need to work together – one flock, not just one sheep. God has a flock of sheep, not just one sheep, ourselves.

So as we learn to be concerned for other people, to work together with others, we appreciate how God does His work, how He cares for us.

But then the Lord Jesus here says: "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd." The Lord Jesus says, "other sheep" and He wants to reach out to them.

We also recognize that though we seek to work together, there are other people in the whole world who need God. There are many people who are seeking for God, who need God; and God desires to reach out to them.

We also need to appreciate our part in the context of the universal church, in the context of the need of the whole world.

In this context, I would like to consider with you briefly with regard to how God has reached out to the world. The Lord Jesus says, "I have other sheep". How did He reach out to the other sheep?

If we think of the way that God has reached out to the world, if we use our natural reasoning, we may not agree with Him. For example today, we have satellite, we have television. We can communicate by SMS, by television, by Internet, by many means of mass and rapid communications. With such things available to us, if we want to send a message to the whole world, what would we do?

We would make use of all these. We would beam the message throughout the world, we would broadcast it throughout the world as fast as we can, and we think we have covered the world.

Do we not know that God has all this power long before we discovered television, Internet and the mobile phone? He could do all these; He could spread the message throughout the whole world instantly. He could bring the message in the skies to everyone to see. Could He not have communicated this immediately to everybody? But we know that He did not. Why is it that God did not do that?

The way that God did seems to be very inefficient. God took a long, long time before the Lord Jesus came into this world. Why did He not send Him much earlier at the very beginning, then this could be proclaimed throughout the world? Why did He go through so much pain trying to nurture the nation of Israel? Why did the Lord Jesus call the disciples to Himself? Why did He spend so much time with them, trying to teach them?

Well, we have no time to go into all these, but I want to raise it to all of us to ponder over this. If we really love the Lord Jesus, we appreciate the cross, we must understand that the cross is very deep in its meaning. God's ways are higher than our ways. The way that God has done things is the very best, but often we do not appreciate it.

If we do not pray, we do not seek the Lord, it is easy for us to do many things that are not God's ways. We think they are effective, they are good, we will seek to reach out to as many people as we can, in whatever ways and means that are available to us, and we think that we will succeed. But God's way is quite different.

God works in our hearts and sometimes in ways that are not very obvious. There are people unknown to us whom God appreciates so much. To us the opinion poll, mass communication, popularity are ways we find very attractive and we think, effective.

It is good for us to come before the Lord, to humble ourselves before Him and to ask Him to teach us His ways. It is only as we do that will we be able to do His work. It is only as we walk with Him and learn from Him that we understand what is the meaningful approach in our own development as well as in our reaching out to other people and in helping them.

Of course, it is true, God does use the Internet, God does use mobile phones, God does make use of the technologies that we have. But we must first understand at the heart of it, what is it that He is seeking to do, how is He approaching it, in what context?

So the Lord Jesus called disciples to Himself, He taught them. He sent the apostles out. He called the apostle Paul, He sent him out to the Gentiles. There are many flocks of sheep subsequently. One day, they will all be gathered together in heaven. We will have one big flock, the bride of Christ, with one Shepherd.

In the meantime, there are many things to be done. God is reaching out to the whole world. Are we a part of this and how are we a part of it? How are we moving with Him?

Let us ask Him to teach us His ways, ask Him to help us to appreciate more what the cross really meant, what did He do at the cross, and how does the cross represent to us much, much more that we may not have thought about. The way of the cross is to the people of the world, foolishness; to the Jews it is a stumbling block. What is it to us?

If to us it is the wisdom of God, then we need to ponder over what it means and to grow in that.

Let us then come before the Lord and ask Him to help us to appreciate Him more deeply, what He has done for us; and also that He will help us personally, and together as His people, to know how we can more effectively identify with Him, depend on Him, and see Him at work in our lives in a very meaningful way.