

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 13 October 2019. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

William Carey: God's Fruit-Bearer in India

Last week, we finished our missions conference, "Bearing Much Fruit." However, over the next couple weeks, we will continue to examine the testimonies of people who bore much fruit for the Lord. As you will remember, the very first Fruit-Bearer whom we learned about was **the Lord Jesus Christ** Himself. Christ is the ultimate Missionary, and Fruit-Bearer. He was sent by His Father to earth to die for our sins and rise again, so that He might purchase salvation for mankind. Through His death and resurrection, He bore much fruit. Then, we examined the life of **the Apostle Paul**. We also examined the witness of **the Waldenses**, who stood fast for Christ for more than 1,000 years, during the dark days of the Middle Ages. We also learned about an Anabaptist preacher named **Balthasar Hübmeier**, who bore a tremendous amount of fruit in Austria in the early 1500's.

Now, we are going to fast-forward another 300 years from the time of Hübmeier, and focus on the nation of England. By the early 1700's, Baptist churches had been established all over England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and the American colonies. However, as the 1600's drew to a close, there was a problem that began to afflict many of the Baptist churches in these countries; and it began to slow down their growth. It wasn't their outward persecution: rather, it was a false and dangerous doctrine from within. It was the doctrine of Calvinism.

Now, if you don't know much about Calvinism, suffice it to say that it is the belief that God did not give man a free will. It is the belief that God *predestined* some men to be damned, and some to be elected (saved). This belief says that man has no *ability* to repent or turn toward God at all. Calvinism says that God *forces* the ones whom He already predestined to be saved to believe and repent, against their own will—and that He chooses to allow everyone else to remain lost, and go to hell. Calvinism teaches that Jesus did not die for the ones who were predestined to be damned—that He died only for the elect. It teaches that God *decreed* that Adam would disobey Him and bring sin upon mankind, so that He could then save a few of the human race, and damn everyone else—and that no one has any choice whatsoever.

Now, any mature Christian in this room knows that this is a false, unbiblical, terrible doctrine. **Second Peter 3:9** says that God is "*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" **John 3:16** says that "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" **Revelation 22:17** says, "*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*" God did *not* make Adam sin. Man *did* choose, by his own free will, to go his own way. God *can and does* illumine lost people's eyes, so that they can understand their need to be saved, and come to Jesus to be saved. Yet, lost people can still choose to walk away from God's offer of salvation, and remain lost. However, this is not God's *desire*. God does *not* desire for any man to perish; and He sincerely calls *all men* to be come to Him and be saved.

Calvinism turns all these precious truths upside down! Now, it is possible for a genuine Christian to be a Calvinist—as long as there was a point, before that person's salvation, when he realised the simple truth that Jesus died in his place, and that he needed to repent of his sin and believe on Christ. Many people down through the years have been saved by hearing the simple Gospel message; but then, unfortunately,

they were indoctrinated in Calvinism *after* their salvation. However, this doesn't change the fact that Calvinism grossly slanders God's character, and makes Him appear unjust, unmerciful, and unfair. It greatly hinders the Gospel, because it makes unsaved people think, "Well, I guess I must be predestined to be damned; so why should I bother to try to repent and turn to Christ?" It also makes those who *do* get saved develop a cold, calloused outlook toward the lost. In other words, it causes Christians not to feel any obligation to obey the Great Commission. A Christian who has bought into Calvinism is tempted to think, "Why do I need to bother trying to win the lost? If it be God's will for the lost to be saved, He'll save them one way or another; so why do I need to try to win them?"

This was *exactly* the thinking of many Christians in the late 1700's. However, there was a poor Englishman whom God used at that time to awaken many of God's people from their spiritual slumber, and to put a new fire into their hearts. God used this man to win many souls to Christ in the land of India, and, at the same time, to awaken many Western churches to their responsibility to send out missionaries. His name was **William Carey**. The title of this message is *William Carey: God's Fruit-Bearer in India*.

I. Carey was a hard worker for the Lord.

In a moment, we will get to our Scripture; but first, let me tell you about William Carey. William Carey was a poor cobbler (shoemaker) who was born in Paulersbury, England, in the late 1700's. At the age of 22 (in 1783), William Carey heard the Gospel from a co-worker at the cobbler shop where he worked; and he received Christ as his Saviour. Soon afterward, he was baptised in a nearby town by a man named John Ryland, and became a member of a Baptist church.¹

Now, God had some big changes in store for Carey's life. Carey continued to work as a cobbler and a schoolteacher; and while he worked, he studied the Bible incessantly. However, he did more than study the Scriptures. He began to study Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, and French; and he became a master of all of them! He would lay his books out and study while he was doing his cobbler work. Why did he do all this? Well, he was beginning to realise that he had a gift for language; and he wanted to use whatever abilities he might have to serve the Lord, in whatever way God may lead him. By the year 1785, he was preaching in several churches in his area; and he soon sensed God's call on his life to be a pastor. As a pastor, he didn't receive enough salary to survive; so he continued to work as a schoolmaster, make shoes, *and* do the work of a pastor!² By the way, I can tell you that being a pastor is hard, full-time, 24-hour-a-day work. Being a married man, working two secular jobs, studying five languages, *and* being a pastor, as Carey did, would be extremely difficult!

Do you see a pattern in Carey's life? Carey was a *hard worker!* You know, brethren, we need to follow his example. We live in an age in which hard work is shunned. We live in an age in which young people are immersed in television, video games, iPods, iPads, smart phones, facebook, tweets, Snapchat, texting, sports, fun, and recreation of a thousand kinds—everything except *hard work!* It's not just the kids, either. Adults, too, hardly know what to do if they are not doing something on their phone, or watching something on the telly, or doing some kind of recreation. Sadly, many people in our society have no desire to work at all, and do not even attempt to find employment. This is an abomination to God! God created man to *work!* From the moment God created Adam in the Garden, He gave him work to do! Let's look at some Scripture.

¹ Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, vol. 2 (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1890; reprint edition, Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer), p. 579.

² *Ibid*, p. 580.

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12.

Read John 9:4.

As the Servant of Jehovah, Jesus had much work to do; and we do, too! As Christians, we should be known as hard workers. We should also work for the right motive. According to the Bible, the purpose of work is to provide for our families, and to have substance to share with others who are in need; but ultimately, it is to serve the Lord! **Ecclesiastes 9:10** says, “*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*” **Ephesians 4:28** says, “*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*” **Colossians 3:23-24** says, “*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*” A Christian should consider every job that he does, no matter how big or small, to be holy. Even if it be scrubbing toilets, God is pleased if you do it with all your might, and do it in order that He might be pleased with you. Christian, look at every job you do as an offering to Him. No kind of work is “beneath” you. God isn’t going to reward you according to how much talent He gave you: He is going to reward you according to whether you used every ability that He gave you to serve Him—and did it with all your might!

William Carey was extraordinarily gifted. However, his gifts would have been absolutely wasted if he had not used them to serve the Lord. One of Carey’s Greek tutors, named Thomas Scott, said of Carey that he was a “plodder.”³ That means that he just kept on trudging along. He kept on working. He just kept moving along, step by step, toward the goal, and didn’t give up, no matter what obstacles came his way. Because Carey used his abilities to serve God, and not to enrich himself, God was able to use his life in such a way that he is still impacting millions of people today. You see, in the year 1792, God called Carey to go to India as a missionary. In India, Carey used his gift for language to translate the entire Bible into 24 Indian languages and dialects—including Maharatta, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Telinga, Bengali, and Bhotanta. He wrote many grammars and lexicons in order to aid missionaries and Indian converts alike in their study of the Scriptures. He also established two Bible colleges in India to train young men for the ministry!⁴

Christians need to be known as people who work hard. Not only should we work hard at our occupations and everyday tasks, but we should work hard in studying the Scripture, so that we may be equipped to tell others about salvation. Paul commanded Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:15**, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” Christian, are you a workman? Are studying God’s Word diligently every day? Pastors are not the only ones who should study the Word of God diligently: *every* Christian should be studying this Book diligently! By the way, studying God’s Word *is* work. King Solomon wrote to his son, “*And further, by these, my son* (by the Scriptures), *be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.*” Studying God’s Word thoroughly does require much labour; but it is rewarding. Every Christian should be completely committed to it. Sadly, though, we live in a day when many Christians don’t want to do real study of Scripture. They are too preoccupied with their possessions, fun, activities, and entertainment. They read the Bible sparsely, and lightly. As for studying it systematically, and in depth, few Christians are willing to make that sacrifice. Many Christians have become satisfied with finding a religious blog or website, or watching a religious

³ *Ibid*, p. 579.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 582.

channel, and listening to someone's opinions, instead of actually reading and studying the Bible themselves: and more often than not, they end up getting caught up in serious spiritual deceptions. (Ninety-nine percent of "Christian" web sites and T.V. channels are riddled with heresies, at best, or outright apostasy at worst.) Sometimes, Christians go to sources outside their Bible, and outside their own local church, because they are feeling convicted about something in their lives, and they want to find someone who will agree with them, and support them in their disobedience. Christian, don't be that kind of believer. Study this Book, and serve the Lord!

In a famous sermon, William Carey said, "Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God."⁵ Christian, attempt great things for God! Work, for the night is coming! This life will be over before you know it. Use your life to serve God! Use every talent, every ability, and every bit of energy you have to serve Him, so that you may bring forth much fruit for Him.

II. Carey had great faith in the Lord.

We've just talked about the importance of *working hard* for the Lord. However, if a Christian be truly working for the Lord, he also will be *trusting* the Lord. You cannot separate true work for the Lord from *faith* in the Lord. Carey himself said, "Attempt great things for God [in other words "work for God"]: but the second part of the statement was, "*expect great things from God* [in other words, "have *faith* in God"]." Work and faith go together. Any work that is truly pleasing to God is the *product* of our faith in Him. We'll talk more about faith in a moment; but for now, let's look more closely at our *work* for the Lord.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:9.

Is this not amazing? Paul says that Christians are "fellow labourers (or 'co-workers') with God." Paul is saying that we who know Christ are actually working *with* God! Now, God certainly doesn't need our help. Yet, He chooses to use us, and to work together with us. Though we are infinitely inferior to God, we actually *cooperate* with Him to carry out His work. Now, make no mistake: He is the Master. He is the one directing the operation. He is not our "Buddy." We are not on equal terms with Him. We do *not* give God our opinions. Paul says that we are "*God's husbandry*" (or, "farm"). In other words, *the "farm" belongs to Him*. He is the Owner and Manager of the farm; and we are His farmhands. Likewise, the "building" (the local church), is *His* building, and not ours. He is the Owner, the Architect, the Foreman, and the Master Builder of His church; and we are the builders, working under His management. (By the way, according to **1 Corinthians 3:11-15**, saved church members are the "building materials," as well.) Yet, even though Christ is our King and Master, He is still *working together* with us.

Now, we must never forget that in any true act of service to God, it is God who is doing the work *through* us, and enabling us to do the work. **Philippians 2:13** says, "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" We must also never forget that we should be allowing the Holy Spirit to "fill," or control us, as we do the work. **Ephesians 5:18** says, "*Be filled with the Spirit.*" Yet, it is important to understand what it means to be "*filled with the Spirit.*" It does not mean that God puts us into some kind of hypnotic "trance," and shuts down our faculties and free will, and moves us about like a robot. No, every step of the way in our service to God, we are *fully aware* of God's will for us, because we have found His will in His

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 581.

Word, and through prayer; and we cooperate with God. We consent to do His bidding. We agree to do God's will, and not our own. We simply *surrender* to what God wants us to do next. Now, we may not *understand* what God wants us to do. We may not be able to see down the road, as God does, and understand what God is ultimately trying to accomplish. Yet, we simply obey His will. That requires *faith*. By *faith*, we step out and do the work that He has called us to do. Though we may not know *how* God is going to provide for us, or how people will respond to the Gospel message that we are trying to proclaim, or whether there will be any dangers or great trials that will arise as we do His work, we simply trust Him, and do what He has commanded.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:5-9. (*“Wherefore”* means “therefore.” Paul is saying, “*Because* we walk by faith, and not by sight, *therefore* we labour for the Lord.” Our work is the product of our faith.)

Read Job 23:8-12. (Job didn't understand what God was doing in his life; but he trusted Him.)

William Carey was a hard worker, who accomplished incredible things in his lifetime. However, the reason that his life was productive was *not* that he was naturally brilliant or talented. His life was productive because he *trusted God*. Imagine what it would have been like to be in Carey's shoes. When he and one other missionary co-worker set sail for India, the missionary society that they had formed (the Baptist Missionary Society) had barely any funds worth mentioning. The day the Baptist Missionary Society was formed, its first deposit was £13—and that was the total contribution of a number of people.⁶ The churches sending them were not large or rich! Imagine stepping onto a ship that you know will take nine months to arrive in India, with no assurance of where your funds will come from once you get there! Also, when Carey set sail for India, there were *no* other missionaries or established churches there at all. They were stepping into pure, pagan darkness, with no help (except the Lord Jesus). What's more, Carey had very little moral or material support, even from the Baptist churches back in England. He was sharply criticised for what he was doing. He made so little money, that he had to work in an indigo factory in order to avoid starvation. In India, the tropical climate constantly afflicted him, and put his health, and very life, and his family's lives, in danger. Furthermore, the English government in India (the East India Company) would not allow him to do his missionary work in their territory, because they didn't want him causing any trouble among the Hindus, by trying to convert them to Jesus. It looked as though the whole endeavour would end in disaster. Yet, somehow, God continually met his needs. The Danish government in Serampore allowed him to work in their territory; and, finally, in 1801, the Marquis of Wellesley founded a college in Fort William, and asked Carey to be the head of the Oriental languages department.⁷ In this post, he had the resources to produce the 24 Bible translations that he produced, as well as all the grammars and lexicons; and he also made a suitable amount of money over the years—about £80,000. But what did he *do* with that £80,000? He built himself a nice house, wore nice clothes, and made his family comfortable, right? Wrong! He gave away almost *all* of it to the Lord's work (except the smallest possible amount to feed his family)! He gave almost that entire £80,000 toward the establishment of Baptist churches and schools in India, and to support other missionaries.⁸ William Carey lived not by sight, but by faith. Christian, how is *your* faith? Do you go, and give, and live by faith?

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 581-582.

⁸ Ibid, p. 583.

III. Carey believed in the Lord's Great Commission.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this message, Carey lived in a day when Calvinism was embraced by most Baptists. Baptists did not embrace Calvinism in the time of Balthasar Hubmeier; but over the next couple centuries, they learned Calvinism in Protestant seminaries, where many of their pastors went for training. Sadly, Calvinism is making a comeback today amongst many Baptists. Why is Calvinism so popular, anyway? Probably the biggest reason is that *it leads Christians to believe that they have no personal responsibility* to try to win the lost. If Calvinism be true—if men have no free will, and God simply is moving everyone around like puppets on a string—then Christians are not really responsible to win the lost, because God will win them somehow or other, against their own will. (In other words, “What will be, will be.”)

That is exactly the stinking, rotten attitude that Carey was up against as he tried to get other Baptist churches to become concerned about foreign missions. Actually, Carey himself didn't have any particular passion for missions until one day when he was teaching the boys' grammar school in Northamptonshire, England. As he was teaching geography to the boys, he looked at the world globe: and a thought occurred to him that had never occurred to him before. He suddenly realised that there were at least 400,000,000 people in the world who had never even heard the name of Jesus Christ at all, and who were heading straight to a burning hell!⁹ (In those days, 400,000,000 people was the greater part of the earth's population.)

Folks, allow me to pause for a moment and say that hell is *real!* It is a place of burning torment; and those who die without repenting and believing on Jesus will be there, in torment, *forever!* They will never get out! It is a place of darkness; a place of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; a place where the worm dies not, and where the smoke ascends up forever and ever!

William Carey was overwhelmed with grief and fear at the thought that the Baptist churches in England weren't doing anything to snatch these souls from the flames. Immediately, he sprang to action. This was urgent! In 1792, he wrote a small book entitled “Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use means for the Conversion of the Heathen.” Sad to say, few people read it, or cared. Then, in a meeting of Baptist pastors, Carey proposed that they discuss Christians' duty to spread the Gospel among the heathen. The moderator of the meeting, John Ryland, Sr., stood up in anger, ordered Carey to sit down, and said, “Young man, when God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine!”¹⁰

Finally, though, Carey began to gain support; and other pastors began to preach in their churches that they needed to do something to reach heathen nations with the Gospel. Then, on May 31, 1792, at a Baptist fellowship in Nottingham, Carey preached a message called “Thy Maker Is Thy Husband.” In this sermon, he made his now famous statement, “Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God.” He was so overwhelmed with the thought that lost people in India and many other heathen lands were lost in darkness and headed to hell, that he broke down sobbing. The people in the meeting that day finally began to realise that they were guilty of *criminal* neglect in not attempting to reach lost souls in parts of the world where the name of Jesus had never been heard. A resolution was made to look into forming a missionary society; and on October 2 of that year, twelve men from several Baptist churches resolved to form the Baptist Missionary Society. By April of 1793, Carey set sail for India; and eight years later, in December,

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 580.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 580-581.

1800 (*eight long years later*, mind you), Carey finally won one Indian man named Krishna Pal to Jesus Christ. Krishna Pal was named after the Hindu god, Krishna; but Krishna turned his back on the false god Krishna, and on every other false god that he had been taught to worship, and put his faith in the true God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Carey baptised Krishna Paul, as well as his own son, Felix, who had recently been saved, in the Ganges River.¹¹ And the rest was history. Many more were saved, both in India and around the world, through Carey's influence. His influence is so great, that he has often been called "The Father of Modern Missions." Multitudes are still being saved today because of this man who believed in the Great Commission!

Folks, do we believe that hell is real? If we do, then are we willing to sacrifice our money, time, and energy, and do whatever it takes to try to snatch them from the flames? If we really love Jesus, then we will be filled with compassion for the lost! You know, there was a missionary named Amy Carmichael (a native of Belfast) who served the Lord in India later in the 1800's. The Lord used her to rescue many young girls from Hindu temples, where they were forced to perform prostitution in the name of their gods. She went into the temples in disguise, snatched the girls right out from under the noses of the perverted priests, sneaked them out of the temples, and sheltered them in her home, and raised them, and led many of them to Christ. Here was what she had to say about Christian service: **"You can give without loving; but you cannot love without giving."** We can talk about love all day; but if we will not give to missions, witness to the lost, knock on doors, hand out tracts, pray for the lost, and pray for missionaries, then our claim that we love the lost is empty. If we will not work for God, then our lack of labour betrays a lack of love.

Read Jude 20-23.

IV. Carey was greatly ridiculed for the Lord.

William Carey was not a rich man in this world. He was always poor. Yet, he was rich in Jesus Christ. He was never loved by any great number of people in his day. He was constantly slandered and falsely accused. The news of Carey's missionary work spread all over England; and everywhere his name was printed, he was scoffed and spoken of with extreme contempt. The *Edinburgh Review* constantly ridiculed Carey and his co-labourers. They denounced Carey and his associates as "fools," "madmen," "tinkers," and "cobblers" (as though being a cobbler were some kind of shameful thing). It was reported, years later, that Carey had received £80,000 for his labour in the language department at the college; and the British public cried out that the Serampore College possessed immense, unwarranted, scandalous wealth. They even gave the whole story a name: "The Serampore Controversy."¹² Carey was accused of being in it for the money. Of course, few newspapers were honest enough to report that *Carey gave almost all of his earnings back to the Lord!* He was constantly misrepresented and maligned, and called "evil."

Brethren, what did Jesus say? He promised us that we would be persecuted in this world. Yet, He also gave this promise. He said, ***"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."***

Matthew 5:10-12

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 581-582.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 581-582.

1 Peter 3:14-16 / 4:12-14

Conclusion: Reward is coming, Christian—if you will serve Christ faithfully. Our reward will be received not only in crowns; not only in light radiating from our resurrected bodies; not only in positions of authority in the 1,000-year Kingdom of Christ; but also in *souls* that will be in heaven because we won them to Christ. By the way, all three of Carey’s sons were saved and baptised, and became missionaries in India themselves. They knew that Jesus was worthy of their heart’s surrender and service, because they saw Jesus Christ in their father’s life! Christian, are you working hard for the Lord? Are you really trusting Him? Are you really endeavouring to carry out the Great Commission? Are you willing to suffer rebuke and scorn for His sake? Are you bearing fruit for Jesus Christ?