



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Global Outreach Week

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A Different Heart

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Let me ask you to open your Bibles to Acts, chapter 20. While you're doing that... Pretty much, most Sundays, this is the point in our worship service where we receive our offering as a part of our worship and our support of God's work around the world. I am excited to tell you that because of the first three Sundays of this month of May, all of our ministry expenses are met. All of our bills are paid. The missionaries are supported.

We have enough to finish this month, and so today, we're not going to take an offering, but if you came today with your offering in hand, with intentions to give, as many of you would have today, we want to encourage you not to keep that for yourself, but to give that away. Give it to something that will advance the gospel in the world. Maybe it's your favorite ministry or missionary, or maybe you have a favorite preaching program on the radio.

Maybe there's someone in your life whom you just know has a desperate need and God might use you to help meet some of that need. Give it away this week. Don't keep it for yourself. We'll just continue to believe and trust God will take care of our needs as a church, as he always has and certainly has this month. There you go, see? They don't always ask you for your money when you come to church, right? At least once. God gets that praise. God is faithful.

Back to what we just watched. I wonder how many of us were watching that video and feeling the amazement of the decision Adam and Emily are making, yet at the same time, not being able to relate to it at all. I mean, how does that happen?

What happens in a person's heart, a couple's heart, or a family's heart, or whoever's heart that sensed the call of God to leave behind the familiar conveniences and comforts of this life, to leave behind even family and grandmas and grandpas to your children, to leave behind possibly years of education, a career, and possessions to go to someplace in the world about which common sense says, "Don't go there"? How does that happen?

Some of you watched that video and you not only can't relate to Adam and Emily, you don't want to relate to Adam and Emily. You're like, "I don't know why that keeps happening to other

people, but it has never happened to me, and I hope it doesn't." I get that. You're probably in really good company if that thought flashed through your mind.

Yet I also believe some of you can relate. Maybe a little bit. Maybe not quite that far along in the journey, but you've been thinking about it or something similar for a while now and you're really still not sure how to process it. You might even be sensing, "I wonder if that would be me someday. I'm kind of open to it, but I'm not sure. Is this God? Is this just me being emotional? What is it?"

Years ago, I was reading an article in which the author of the article quoted from a profound little book published in 2005 titled, *Lives Given, Not Taken: 21st Century Southern Baptist Martyrs*. I want you to listen to the foreword of this book.

"Immediately following the deaths of Southern Baptist workers in Yemen, Iraq, and other places, the International Mission Board received an outpouring of support and consolation. But it did not take long for the questions to come. 'Why do missionaries go to dangerous places?' 'How can the [Mission Board] be so irresponsible to send missionaries to places where their lives will be endangered?'

There were demands to bring the missionaries home. Some reflected that this loss of life was such a waste and could have been avoided. Apparently, the top priority in the minds of many was the safety of missionaries. Yet those who died gave their lives as a witness to their faith and testimony to their obedience and devotion to their Lord. They died because they were willing to be in a place where their lives were vulnerable—because offering eternal life to others was more important than maintaining their own earthly lives."

The foreword ended with these words: "These were individuals whose lives were given, not taken." In this book, we meet a missionary named Karen Watson who, at 38 years old, died in Iraq after her vehicle was ambushed and attacked on March 15, 2004. The book published a handwritten letter she wrote to her pastors at Valley Baptist Church in Bakersfield, California.

Has anybody ever been to Bakersfield? It's a lot like Iraq. It's very similar. Those of you who have been there, right? I'm not lying. It's pretty much Iraq. Anyway, that was her sending church. She had written a letter long before that day of her death. It was sealed. On the outside of the envelope, she had written, "Open in case of death." It said,

"Dear Pastor Phil & Pastor Roger, You should only be opening this letter in the event of death. When God calls there are no regrets. I tried to share my heart with you as much as possible, my heart for the Nations. I wasn't called to a place. I was called to Him. To obey was my objective, to suffer was expected, His glory was my reward, His glory is my reward.

One of the most important things to remember right now is to preserve the work. [...] I am writing this as if I am still working among my people group. I thank you all so much for your prayers and support. Surely your reward in Heaven will be great. Thank you for investing in my

life and spiritual well being. Keep sending missionaries out. Keep raising up fine young pastors. [...]

I once read in *The Missionary Heart*:
Care more than some think is wise.
Risk more than some think is safe.
Dream more than some think is practical.
Expect more than some think is possible.

I was called not to comfort or success but to obedience. There is no joy outside of knowing Jesus and serving him. I love you two and my church family. In his care, Karen."

What is it about people like Karen and most of our missionaries that brings them to this seemingly radical devotion to Jesus and the spreading of his gospel? I've titled the message today, *A Different Heart*. Karen listed four ways the missionary heart is different in her letter and I completely agree with her.

What I want to do for the next few minutes together is I want to convince all of us that the heart she describes in her letter should not be limited to just a missionary who goes somewhere far away. The only way we will ever be able to relate at all to the Adams, Emilys, and Karen Watsons of the world... The only way that's going to make sense to us is if we're convinced that it's not just the missionary's heart that is different; it's the Christian's heart that is different.

It's every Christian heart that is made different by the saving grace and substitutionary death of a Savior so we can be forgiven and know God forever. That heart is changed, somehow, in some way. I want to see if I could maybe convince you of that before we're done. Let's stand now for the reading of God's Word. We're in Acts, chapter 20. We're going to pick it up in verse 17.

"Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. And when they came to him, [Paul] said to them: 'You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.'" While you're standing, turn to chapter 21, verse 10.

"While we were staying [in that place] for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and

said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, "This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, 'Let the will of the Lord be done.'"

Father, I just pray that you would bless the reading, the hearing, and the preaching of your Word today. God, I pray that you would open our hearts and show us, more than ever, that our hearts are different because of Jesus. I pray, God, that today, we would gain and glean more of his heart. I pray this in Christ's name, amen.

Paul clearly hears God's call to go to Jerusalem and preach the gospel to the Jewish people. Every step of the way people are trying to talk him out of it. They are concerned about Paul's safety. A prophet speaks for God and says, "If you go there, it's not going to be fun. In fact, you may die there," and Paul wouldn't listen. He knows he's probably going to die if he goes.

I clearly see in Paul's heart at least two out of those four things Karen Watson describes as the missionary heart and ultimately, I want to say, every Christian heart. Let's start with the first one.

1. Because our hearts are different, we care more than some think is wise. The question is...*How does that happen to us?* Why was Paul willing to die in Jerusalem at the hands of the very people he was going to tell about the love of Jesus and his death on the cross for the forgiveness of their sins? Why was he willing to let them kill him in order for the privilege of telling them that?

Why did Karen Watson care about Iraqis enough to be willing to lose her life? How did the Briels and others start to care so much that it doesn't seem wise to the rest of us sitting here? Why did Joel and Sue Garrison, with their two adopted kids from two countries, leave us and go to Nepal? Why did Greg and Rhonda Von Tobel go several times a year into the prisons of Africa to bring the gospel? Does God speak to these people in burning bushes? How does that happen?

I think the apostle Paul kind of shows us a little bit of why and how this happens. Here's what I think Paul shows us. We care more than some think is wise because...

A. We actually see real people in real places. Someone said there's a road from the eyes to the heart that does not pass through the intellect. There's a path from our eyes to our heart that doesn't go through the brain. Said a different way, the eyes are the windows to our hearts. I think that's what we kind of see in Paul's life here.

Right here in verse 18 of chapter 20, he says, "You guys know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day I set foot in this country." Paul had gone to the people. He had lived with them and he cared about them. He ended up loving them and he stayed there to share the gospel with them in spite of all the plots of the Jews to mess with him.

I think we have to be reminded that care and compassion in a heart doesn't happen in a vacuum. We just don't wake up one day and all of a sudden care about the people in some other weird place. No, it happens to us. It grows up inside us. When we see that Hindu and that Buddhist trapped in the hopeless darkness of karma and reincarnation, that care and compassion...

We start to care more than people think is wise when we see that tribe in Brazil that's trapped in the savagery of their sin-broken hearts, longing for peace. It happens when we see the university students whose minds are being trapped by the empty pride and deceit of intellectualism. It happens when we see the inmates who are trapped in their guilt and condemnation, longing for a second chance, longing for God's mercy, and longing for a new life.

It happens when we see Muslims who are trapped in the fear of their God and know nothing of the love and the grace of God who created them and sent his Son to die on a cross for them so they may be forgiven and know him and live with him forever.

I remember the first time I felt compassion for a people group I'd never even thought possible. Many years ago, I stood before you on the Sunday before I left with a team from our church to go to Russia. I stood before you and I confessed I didn't want to go. I didn't really want to go. After all, Ronald Reagan had called Russia the evil empire. Why would I want to go to the evil empire?

I said, "Pray for us. We're going to go and see what God is doing there with the gospel." When I got there, I saw a country that thrived and boasted in war. Everywhere you went, there were armed soldiers, banners, monuments, statues, and graveyards, all hailing the glories of the wars they had fought. Yet I also saw real people desperately trying to survive 70 years of horrible, oppressive communism.

Let's stop right here and bring it a little closer to home. Do we see our coworker as a real person in a real place? Do we see our neighbors as real people? How about our employees or our friends who don't know Jesus? Maybe that brother-in-law or mother-in-law? How about the homeless people all around us, the addicts, or all these people of different nationalities that live all around us now. Do we see them as almost like not really people, just humans who take up space in our daily world whom we keep at a safe emotional and physical distance from ourselves?

What if we actually talked to our neighbor? What if we actually tried to get to know that person at work or that friend who doesn't know Jesus? What if we entered into their lives? What if we invited them into our homes? What if we had a meal with them? What if we just went to coffee, had dessert, or just did something where we started to see them as real people and we find that they're actually trying to live and survive in the same sin-broken world we are?

I think what begins to happen when we start to see them again as real people is, naturally, care and compassion begin to rise up. For the Christian, the missionary journey to sharing Jesus with people he puts in our path doesn't start in our hearts with this overwhelming random compassion

for a people or person we've never seen or met. It doesn't start in burning bushes. It starts in our eyes. It starts with seeing real people in real places.

B. *We begin to understand that those real people suffer without Jesus.* They're not just real people who live around us and work around us. They actually are real people who suffer. In verse 19, Paul tells us he ministered "**...with all humility and with tears...**" It was with tear-filled eyes that Karen Watson saw the Iraqi people. It was through tear-filled eyes that Jesus saw the Jewish people as sheep without a shepherd.

You see, when we see real people in real places, many times, to our own surprise, we see through our own tears that real people long for meaning. They long for purpose. They long for fulfillment. They long for contentment, happiness, peace, and significance, just like we do. When we see that and see that they're real, then all of a sudden, we also see that these real people in real places struggle with fears, shame, quiet disappointments, desperations, and despair just like some of us do.

Then, we remember that the human heart desperately needs to be born again, forgiven, and made new by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. That's the only place lasting peace comes from, knowing that death has been defeated, our sins have been forgiven, eternal life is real, and we get to live with the God who loves us that much. That's where life changes.

That's what happened to Brad Volk and the Williams family in our church when they went to Chile and they saw the suffering of people who were wiped out by a tsunami that hit their town in the middle of the night and killed most of their family and took most of their belongings out to sea.

It happened to Sicilia Fazio when she went to Varanasi, India, and saw the horrible hopelessness of Hinduism, worshipping rocks, cows, and rats. It happened to the Sasakis when they went to the unreached tribes in Papua New Guinea and they saw these people, forgotten. Nobody on the whole face of the earth even knows they're in these jungles, and they saw them for themselves.

It happened to me when I went to Japan for the first time. We were told that Japan is the second-most unreached nation in the world for Jesus. There are fewer Christians in Japan than every other nation in the world except one. When I got there, we saw the millions with never a smile. The sadness and hopelessness of Shintoism and that religion that is so terrible, dark, hopeless, and meaningless...

I saw it when I went to Nepal and we saw the demonic strongholds of the temple culture where temples are everywhere and just filled with demons, ugliness, and darkness. It happened to me when I went back to Russia the second time and I saw the women desperate for any modicum of safety, security, and happiness.

I saw the Russian men with no soul and no self-worth, beaten down by 70 years of communism, most of them drowning in alcoholism with no future and no hope. So we kept going and sending teams, love, and money. We helped the believers in Russia to build their own church building.

For the first time in the darkness in that part of the world, they could come together and worship Jesus together, because we saw that people without Jesus will always suffer.

G.K. Chesterton said, a century ago, for those who do not believe in God, joy is peripheral and sorrow is fundamental. Yet for believers in God, sorrow is peripheral and joy is the fundamental state of being. It's the fundamental state of living. That's the difference. We understand that we experience both joy and sorrow. That's the natural part of human experience, but haven't we known believers who, even while in the stranglehold of sorrow and suffering, have reminded us of the personal victory and joy of knowing God personally?

Have you known that Christian? Have you met that believer who's in the midst of what looks like, to the world, hopeless suffering, and yet there's still a sense of mission, purpose, joy, contentment, and all that stuff that doesn't make sense? We've seen it so we care for the people God has put in our paths.

We care for those people in our lives more than others think is wise, not because we're unrelatable missionaries called by God from burning coffee tables. That's what we think, you know? "My coffee table in my living room has never lit on fire and God has never spoken to me from it, so I guess that must have happened to those people up there." No, that didn't happen to them! It happened because for all of us with changed hearts, we actually see real people in real places who are suffering without real hope in a real Savior named Jesus.

2. *We risk more than some think is safe.* Perhaps this is the hardest to overcome, because if we're honest, we're all wired to avoid pain at all costs, aren't we? Of course we are. Tens of millions of Americans are taking every level of painkiller from ibuprofen to opioids daily, with millions of them unable to live with this stuff every day. To make it even more difficult for us to relate to Adam and Emily or to the Karen Watsons of the world, we live in a safety-at-all-costs world. Avoid pain at all costs, and safety at all costs.

I just found out recently that car seats for kids now have expiration dates. I don't know why that absolutely blew me away and kind of cracked me up. I think I do know why. It's because we had the car seat for all three of our kids for like 20 years, and when we bought it at some thrift store it was 20 years old. That thing expired before we even bought the thing. Who knows how unsafe my children were, but they lived! They got through it.

It makes sense that the goal to avoid danger at all costs is a mindset that we in our culture have to struggle with in our hearts. For the heart that's different, we are willing to risk more than some think is safe because we get to that place where...

A. *We expect and accept rejection.* Karen Watson wrote in her letter, "I wasn't called to a place. I was called to Him. To obey was my objective, to suffer was expected..." That's what we see from Paul here, isn't it?

In verse 19, Paul says he served "**...with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews...**" Then, in verse 22, he says, "I'm going to

Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what's going to happen except... This is what I know. In every city I go to, God has warned me that there are going to be afflictions that await me." Yet he kept going. He always went.

For most of us, we will go to any lengths to avoid the pain of rejection, but if we're ever going to be that missionary to our friend, that person at work, that neighbor, that family member, or whoever God puts in our path... If we're ever going to be open to telling them and taking Jesus to them, we have to get over our fear of rejection. We have to let our salt out of the saltshaker and we can't keep putting our light under a blanket of fear.

Paul wrote this to us in 2 Corinthians: "To some people, we're going to be the odor, the aroma, and the taste of life, but to others, we're going to be the taste and aroma of death. That's okay. God is glorified either way. We bring them Jesus and then we let Jesus do the rest." We expect and accept rejection.

B. *We remember that this world is not our home.* There has to come a moment, I think, in all of our lives... For some of you, this has happened. For some of you, it hasn't happened yet, but we're getting closer. There has to come that moment in every one of our lives, in every one of our hearts, that we believe this world is not our permanent address. We have to get to that point. My life, my comfort, and my convenience are completely negotiable for the sake of the gospel.

Look at verse 24 of Acts 20. Paul says, "**But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus...**" It's the same ministry we've all received from the Lord Jesus. "Go, therefore, and make disciples." That's the same ministry to Paul, to Adam and Emily, to Karen Watson, to you, and to me. It's the same ministry.

This only makes sense in the light of the cross, doesn't it? It only makes sense when we see that Jesus, the Son of God, leaves the permanency of the glory of heaven to come to this sin-broken world and take on human flesh to do everything necessary to save us from it forever. That's the only reason our heart is different.

The Scottish evangelist Henry Drummond used to say something like, "Don't touch Christianity unless you are willing to seek the kingdom of heaven first. I promise you a miserable existence if you seek it second." Sadly, I think that's where most of us are living.

We love the kingdom of heaven, but I think we love this kingdom just a little bit more and we forget that's our mailing address. That's our forwarding address. That's where we're going. That's where we're heading. This isn't permanent. We're not going to be here forever. Somewhere in our hearts, when that changes, all of a sudden we care more and we risk more than people think makes sense.

Right now, I'm taking the elders and all the pastors through this little book called *The Gospel: How the Church Portrays the Beauty of Christ*. We're reading this in preparation for our annual retreat.

By the way, a sidenote here... All of your elders and pastors are leaving for a couple of days this week. The purpose of our retreat this year is to immerse ourselves in this very emotional and sad issue of rising domestic abuse in the church. I get emotional just talking about it.

We're going to immerse ourselves in this topic and we're going to be praying and asking ourselves, "What is our place, what is our role in the lives of people who have domestic abuse of all sorts going on?" So, please remember to pray for us this week. Okay, that was a sidenote. Let's get back to where we were.

In the back of this book, toward the end, there was something I read that I thought would be appropriate for us this morning. The author, Ray Ortlund, says something like, "The gospel never advances without someone paying a price. It takes courage to live in the reality of that cost, but it is also freeing. We are no longer encumbered with self-interest, no longer imprisoned within past accomplishments. We're no longer intimidated by our past failures. Instead, we are free to run the race set before us, looking to Jesus alone."

Therefore, we must relocate ourselves mentally at the starting line of that race we're going to run, at the foot of the mountain we're going to climb, and rejoice over it as life's greatest adventure, and then do the next hard thing. The starting line, the foot of that mountain of remembering we have a ministry of reconciliation to tell people about Jesus. That's the starting line, so we have to get back there. Then he says the greatness of Christ creates courage in us. That is how mature Christians think: they are gripped by the gospel and become eager, open, and forward-looking.

That's my hope for us today, that we would be more gripped by the gospel that saves us, that we will relocate ourselves (mentally, at least) at the starting line that he saved us, not just so we can get to heaven but so we can bring people with us. My hope is that we would be willing to risk a little more than others think is safe and care a little more than others think is wise in order that our friends, coworkers, neighbors, and family members will know how much Jesus loves them.

I think the only way to even do this is just to bow our heads for a minute. Would you be brave enough to just bow your heads? No funny business. I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand, stand up, walk an aisle, or do anything like that. I'm not going to handcuff you to a one-way ticket to somewhere like Bakersfield. We're not going to go there.

Would you just bow your heads? I'm wondering. Would you just be willing right now to just say, "God, I confess I haven't been caring much. I haven't seen (whoever's name comes to mind) as a real person lately. Would you help me to care about them more and to be willing to risk a little more?" Whatever that prayer sounds like in your mind, fill in the name of a real person (or two or three) and just ask God that he would help you care for them as real people. Just you and him, right now.

With our heads bowed, let's take another step in prayer. I wonder if some of you might be willing to pray this prayer. Maybe it's a little fewer people than who just prayed, but I wonder how many of you would say, "God, it has been a long time since I've been on one of these Global Encounter

Trips," or, "God, I've never been on one. I've just never thought about that for me. God, would you open my heart to that?"

I'm wondering if you would say a prayer like this right now. "God, sometime in the next 24 months, would you prepare my heart to go on a Global Encounter Trip with my church?" However that sounds in your own words, I'm just going to encourage you right now to pray that prayer, that you would see real people in real places in our world, suffering without Jesus.

Finally, while our heads are bowed, this may be the fewest number of all. I don't know, but I'm wondering how many of you would be willing to pray, "God, send me." You may not know where or when, but I'm wondering if you'd be willing to quit your job, sell all your stuff, and go to places most people will try to talk you out of.

Some of you in this room have been thinking about that. Others of you never thought about it for a minute until just today. I'm going to give you an opportunity. "God, if I'm next, would you help me to believe?" Whatever that sounds like in your words... You and God, right now.

Father, I thank you for the families you've called out from amongst us all these years. I pray, God, that you would continue your work through your people in this church by helping them to care more and risk more than others think is wise. God, may we never stop believing. We pray you are pleased and glorified and that thousands more would come to faith in Jesus. It's in his name and with his heart we pray, amen.

Now, listen to me. There are some of you sitting here today... Again, you may not know when or where, but there's something inside you that says, "What do I do with these feelings? What do I do with this sense? Is this just emotions? Is this God speaking? What's the next step? How do I process this going on with me in my life?" Maybe you've never even told anyone about it. Maybe you have.

We have a way for you to at least take a baby step in trying to get answers to your questions. Right after the service, Pastor Corey is going to have some people with him who have all been through that process of just trying to figure out, "Is this me, God? Is it time? Where? When?" All I'm going to invite you to do is, if you want to know what the next baby step is, just come over there.

Pastor Corey will have something to give to you. It'll be something about a meeting or however you can get your questions answered. Again, this is not pressure. We're not signing you up. We're just saying if that's the sense you're having, sometimes you just need someone to take you by the hand and say, "What's happening? Let's talk about it. Let's figure it out." I hope, before you walk out of this room, you'll go over there and say, "I'm not signing up. I just want to know what I need to do."

For the rest of you, I want to encourage you. There's an information meeting in your bulletin about all of the Global Encounter Trips still to go this year. We also have more next year. Every year, we send 200 people from this congregation overseas somewhere for a week to 10 days. I'm

hoping that some of you who have never gone will be going in the next two years. If you just need prayer about anything going on in your life or in your family, there are some people up here who would love to pray with you about that before you go home.

Have a great Memorial Day weekend, whatever's left of it. You're smart; you stayed in town. Way to go! We'll look forward to being together next Sunday. See you then.