

## The Coastlands are Hoping for You.

*“My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever and my righteousness will never be dismayed” (Isa. 51:5, 6).*

There are some things that we need to take note of in this passage. First, God’s salvation “has gone out.” That is the message of His salvation has been preached. Although Jesus had not yet come when this was written, the gospel had been preached in that God said He would bring a great blessing upon “those of faith” through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:8, 9). Since the text says this salvation is part of His “righteousness” drawing near, it is fitting that His next statement is that He will “judge the peoples.” Of course, we know Isaiah is preaching to Judah. And Judah, at this point, had forgotten the great worth of God’s salvation and, it seemed, were just plain tired of always waiting on God and doing things His way. However, God says, “The coastlands hope for me.” Although Israel and Judah were turning away from God, there were people in the world that were seeking Him. They were even waiting for, and accepting of, His arm of justice.

Much of the world today sounds like the Israel and Judah we read about in the OT prophets. God spreads His arms to reach out to His beloved creations and they push their Father away (Isa. 65:2). We often hear remarks today similar to those in Malachi: “How {has God} loved us?” or “Where is the God of justice?” (Mal. 1:2; 2:17). Even though there are many people who feel this way, the point is that **there are still many more that “hope” and “wait” for God and His salvation!** I have seen these people. They feel wretched and lost. They may even have money but feel worthless. They are lonely and can never seem to find a relationship that gives them what they need. They live down the street from you and work with you. Many of them pass you in the grocery store. However, many of them also live 200, 1,000, and 10,000 miles from you. To this Jesus says, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15). In reality, this means **they are hoping for you!**

There are three major obstacles that keep people from preaching the gospel. First, we often find it difficult to break out of our shell to share it with others. Second, many times the kind of people that will be most accepting of it is the kind of people we like to avoid. Third, we don’t make it a priority in our life to teach others. The latter is especially made easy when we wrongly think that the preacher and elders are the ones who should be teaching others. Paul, knowing that many people in his day struggled with these same obstacles, often reminded the Saints that they “were dead” before they came to know God’s “mercy” (Eph. 1:1, 4). Next time you are waiting in line at the post office, take a good long look at the mother with three screaming children (you know, the ones that normally annoy you). It is a good chance she is not a Christian. That also implies there is a good chance her children never will be either. Or what about that kind older man that greets you at Wal-Mart. Can you really ignore the fact that they are probably “**DEAD**” like **YOU ONCE WERE** and will all spend an eternity in hell? The time to say something is today.

Not only does each individual Christian need to become more evangelistic, but it needs to become a high priority in each family and congregation. Just like the roots of an ungodly life often go back to an ungodly raising, the roots of unevangelistic Christians often go back to a lack of teaching and

training by parents, preachers, and elders. Parents need to discuss with their sons the need for gospel preachers. Your daughters need to know that both men and women are responsible for teaching the lost. Preachers and elders need to make sure that every man, young and old, is trained to preach and teach (to the best of his ability) whether that is his career choice or not. Like some have done already, every congregation needs be prepared to train and send a preacher out from among them (similar to Acts 13). These are just a few things that can be done.

There are about 6.7 billion people in this world. How many of those do you think are “dead?” Currently, I am the only gospel preacher among the 26 million Scandinavians. Who will come help me try to find those that are still hoping in and waiting for the Lord in these five nations? Who will go help Les Maydell and the other 4 or 5 preachers in South Africa reach the 47 million people there. Who will go help Alex Seregin save souls among the 142 million people in Russia? What about the billions of people in China, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, France, Spain, Portugal, Singapore and thousands of other nations that have 1 or no preachers working among them. Will you go help Rick Lanning and the few others among the 5.5 million in Minnesota? What about the 4 or 5 preachers among the 8 million in Wyoming, North and South Dakota, Iowa, Idaho, and Montana? If you are reading this, you should get rid of the idea now that this is not to you. We can no longer try to comfort ourselves by thinking someone else will go. The truth is that most Christians have heard this before and most walk away without another thought. What will **YOU** do today?

I grew up in Tennessee. I would estimate there are at least 150 preachers working among the 6.2 million in Tennessee. The southern U.S. is comfortable, beautiful, and, for the most part, the people are fairly moral. However, huddling together in one relatively small region of the world is not getting the job done. If we truly want to see progress in the spread of the gospel, there are some things we all have to start doing. It will take each of us making that first step out of our comfort zone. It will take every adult making the effort to train his or her children. It will take every congregation working for it. Each of us will have to reach a little deeper into our pockets to provide for those who answer the call. Apathy for the lost must not be an option! We can reach those who are still hoping and waiting for the salvation of the Lord. “Conduct yourself wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of your time” (Col. 4:5).