

STEP THROUGH THE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GOSPEL

+ THE GREAT COMMISSION

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:16-20)

- Jesus told his eleven disciples “Go and make disciples of all nations...surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” If we were one of these apostles, how would we feel? Very likely we would not have believed.
- Consider the spiritual conditions of the eleven disciples at the time. When Jesus was captured, they were fearful and fled, even if they had followed Jesus and saw His miracles – resurrection of the dead, walking on water, feeding five thousand with two fish and five loaves – their responses remained unbelieving. The verse tells us that even after they saw Jesus after the resurrection, some still doubted. Can these doubting disciples deliver the gospel to the nations? It seemed impossible. However, the great commission was accomplished. Our coming to Christ are proof to having benefited from the gospel. The gospel has indeed been spread far and wide. These eleven disciples have accomplished mission impossible.

+ TRUST THAT GOD IS WORKING

- When we come into God's house, our thoughts must be renewed. Let us not dwell in our past failures and how people see us and let these things influence us. We must trust that God is using us to achieve great things.
- Testimony 1—*from obedience to mission impossible*: Pastor Grace never liked writing, yet today she has penned numerous sermons and published books. God always works this way: when we become His children, He uses us to do many impossible tasks – not by our might, where we go to school, family background, or eloquence – by our abiding in Christ as illustrated in John 15:5: ***“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”***
- Testimony 2—*drug addict turned evangelist*: Liu Min-He used to be a serious drug addict and gang member. His mother was a minister and loves him very much. Liu failed many self-attempts to break off his addiction, until he encountered the gospel at last. Afterward, he was invited to establish an evangelical rehab center in Taiwan because there was a great need at the time. Heeding the call, he moved to Taiwan with his newlywed in 1984 and established the center, whose mission was to deliver people from addiction without medication – solely by the power of Christ. Today, the rehab center has expanded to thirteen branches.
- In this testimony we see the transformation of a life initially headed for failure, turned around when he willingly surrendered to God and takes a leap of faith. God delights in using people like him.

- Testimony 3—*the glorious work of serving children*: When Pastor Grace was serving in Hsinchu many years ago, a mother brought her fifteen year old son to Pastor Grace for spiritual nurturing. Pastor Grace led the boy to Christ and taught him to prioritize prayer and drawing near to God over anything else. He listened and obeyed. When he was seventeen, Pastor Grace invited him to become a teacher at Sunday School because there was a need at the time. He hadn't received any training for it but expressed willingness. After his time in the military ended, he wanted to serve teenagers and sought God about it. However, God chose to remain silent at the time and didn't open a way. So the brother remained faithfully ministering to children.
- Today, this brother is being used by God expansively in children's ministry and has become a minister, known as Minister Levi. Minister Levi has led many children to knowing God and being filled by Holy Spirit, including those who suffer under autism and other psychological disorders. Moreover, he has trained Sunday school teachers and principals from churches throughout Taiwan. Holy Spirit has led him step by step, expanding his tabernacle to include adolescents. He established a youth training camp that served both children and adolescents, equipping them to become young forerunners and leaders. As a result, the parents of these youth have testified their children's growth and transformation with great excitement.
- Minister Levi has also brings these young forerunners on his mission trips. Last year, he brought 20 young people from second grade through high school to minister in a four-day character camp attended by 102 youths. About fifty to sixty youths from this group were newcomers, the other twenty foster children with parents in prison. The young forerunners worked together to organize this event. They served in the event's administration, prayer watch, and prophetic and healing ministries. Originally Minister Levi planned to administer altar call on the last day of the camp. However, the young prayer warriors received word from God to do the altar call on the third day. As a result, fifty to sixty children accepted Christ. Minister Levi saw that these young forerunners have great potential and have brought them to serve the Taiwanese aborigines and local villagers. Now, he is planning to bring them on mission trips abroad.
- Let us not underestimate the meaning in serving children. God desires to speak to our children. There was once when five children prayed for a Sunday School principal, which brought the principal into tears. Later he told Minister Levi that these five children's prayers revealed the five stages of his life, which gave him tremendous help and strength.
- Remember that Minister Levi used to be a boy who was sent to Pastor Grace to be spiritually nurtured. At the time, he was a seventeen-year old boy and served about ten children at Sunday School. He continued serving faithfully for twenty years. By his simple obedience at the beginning, God has revealed the blueprint of his life step by step.

✦ ***EXPANDING GOD'S CALLING WITH ENVIRONMENT'S NEEDS***

- God usually doesn't, at the foremost, reveal how He's going to use us, whether it is to make us into a minister of the nations or a globe-trotting evangelist. God cares most about our obedience, about whether or not we are willing to step out into an environment when there is a need. It is not even about whether or not

we have a burden or interest in that area, but about serving wherever there is a need. Actually, Minister Levi expressed that he did not have the burden or interest in serving children. He was the youngest among his siblings and did not have any experience in serving children. Pastor Grace also expressed that she had invited Brother Levi to teach Sunday School merely for the purpose of filling a need at the time. She did not expect that God had a greater purpose in Brother Levi in children's ministry.

- Do we desire God to reveal to us the blueprint of our lives? We must step out according to the needs of our environment. God has a beautiful plan for our lives. In the Book of Acts, the early church chose seven administrators to oversee the serving of food. Stephen was one of the seven chosen men. Later, when he was filled by Holy Spirit and began to preach, many people came to Christ.
- A church cannot stay in the comfort zone and isolation for long. One example is the church in Jerusalem in the Book of Acts. The gospel was spread wherever the disciples went, only after persecution came upon the church..

✦ ***SPREAD THE GOSPEL AND EXPERIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS***

- Last year, intercessors saw a vision: many things are being built up. Simultaneously, our church has received the impression for evangelism. Now, for the students' convenience, Forerunner Christian Church has established locations near universities in the Bay Area, ie: SF and Berkeley.
- Forerunner Christian Church's Mission SF co-workers Steven and Young invited a sister who is also a student at a San Francisco college to participate in the ministry. This sister is timid about meeting strangers so she expressed to her small group leader that she didn't want to leave her small group. She wanted to stay to help. The small group leader told this sister not to worry, and that she should pray for God's guidance. This sister prayed and felt moved to join the SF ministry because God wants her to grow and break through. After two weeks of serving in SF, she is very happy because she has obeyed and is experiencing God's power working through her.
- Forerunner Christian Church's new Cupertino branch is located near Stanford University. The movement of the gospel into the vicinity of university campuses has been a desire inside Pastor Grace's heart for many years. In the past, Pastor Grace lived close to Tsinghua University and Jiao-Da in order to serve the college students there. Campus ministries are very important. Who amongst us are willing to be involved in this ministry?

✦ ***GIVE YOURSELF TO MINISTRY TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S WORK***

I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:23)

- Pastor Grace wants to give this verse as a gift to young people. May your home be an outlet for the gospel so that you may share in its blessings.
- When a person steps out in obedience, s/he does not sink into a hole of impossibility. Rather, s/he begins to experience miracles. When Cosmic Light Magazine reached its 20th anniversary, the wife of the co-founder,

Xiao-fen Chang, wrote an article titled “When are you giving back my husband?” It was not a somber article, but rather a happy one. It described how God has filled her family of four with His grace and joy in spite the throes of ministry work. Every week, the family's phone call time average four hours. When Lin Chi-ping visited his son abroad, he found his son frugal but incredibly generous when donating to the Cosmic Light ministry.

- We also need to leave our comfort zones, step out and experience God's faithfulness, then we'd know what His will is. It is like when a father marries off his daughter, he notices that she becomes very diligent and skillful. God's kingdom is likewise. We need to go out and nurture the next generation—whether children, teenagers or college students—we must step out and become independent.
- Let us ask God: At this stage, where should I serve? What's my calling? God has established Israel to demonstrate His will. What He does for this nation He is also doing for the nations. September was the Jewish New Year, as well as the Lord's New Year. This new year signifies the opening of a door of opportunity and the gushing out of heavenly inheritance from above and from inside ourselves.

+ ***ACTION PLAN:***

1. Continue reading the book of Samuel and carry out your acts of loving God.
2. Continue praying for your VIP list and ask God give you opportunity to lead them into knowing Him.

+ ***DISCUSSION:***

1. Please share if you ever had the experience of receiving more when you give out so that you can do even more things.
2. These two years is the harvest of the gospel, it's a time to ask God for lost souls. If you're pastoral zone is about to grow and expand, what role can you play in this expansion? (ex. Pastoring (children, young people), administrative volunteer, teaching, spreading the gospel, etc...) How do you plan to equip yourself?