

**LET ALL
THE PEOPLES
PRAISE YOU**

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The aim of this prayer guide is simple:

to encourage you to pray for some of the world's most urgent needs in light of the truths of God's Word.

That's why each day contains a brief reflection from God's Word alongside a snapshot of urgent needs in a particular country. ¹

However, before you get started, it's important to know why we've highlighted these particular countries and these particular needs. And this requires understanding the scope of the mission Christ has given to his church.

¹ Many of the reflections from God's Word in this guide are adapted from David Platt's "Pray the Word" podcast.

30 Days of Prayer

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*May God be gracious to us and bless us and make
his face to shine upon us, that your way may be
known on earth, your saving power among all
nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all
the peoples praise you!*

Psalm 67:1-3

Getting Started

All Nations

Following his death and resurrection, Jesus commanded his disciples to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). However, when Jesus used the word “nations” (*ethne*), he was not referring to the nearly two hundred nations, or countries, that exist in the world today. He was referring to peoples, tribes, or languages, what we might refer to today as people groups.

People groups are ethno-linguistic groups of people that share a common language and cultural characteristics, a common ethnicity. Approximately 17,000 people groups have been identified in the world today, and the church’s mission is to make disciples among all of them. Sadly, though, over 7,000 of these people groups are still considered *unreached*. Understanding this word is critical for the church’s mission, so we need to make sure we know what it means to be unreached.

Unreached

Unreached peoples and places are those among whom Jesus is largely unknown and the church is relatively insufficient to make Jesus known in its broader population without outside help. It is estimated that out of the over 8 billion people in the world today, over 3 billion of them (about 40%) are unreached.

A person who is a part of an unreached people group is in a different situation than your non-Christian family, friends, and neighbors. It’s not simply that they don’t believe the gospel or that they haven’t heard it explained clearly, as unfortunate as that is. It’s that they don’t

even have access to a Christian or a church that could share the gospel with them. Practically speaking, they will be born, live, die, and go to hell without ever hearing about who Jesus is and what he has done to provide forgiveness and eternal life. Reaching them with the gospel is therefore an *urgent* need. But even that is not the full picture.

Urgent Needs

In addition to urgent spiritual needs, many of the hardest to reach peoples and places in the world also have urgent physical needs. They suffer under conditions such as repressive governments, extreme poverty, or the threat of human trafficking, to name but a few. Because these are people created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), their suffering should matter to us. It should also matter to us because these physical conditions and needs often create barriers to the spread of the gospel, which is everyone’s most urgent need. This is why Radical supports the faithful and effective work of national believers through and for the local church among the unreached in places with the most urgent spiritual and physical needs through Urgent. (Go to urgentneeds.org to learn more).

Sadly, only a tiny percentage of the church’s resources and efforts are currently aimed at addressing the world’s hardest to reach peoples and places. This reality is known as the *Great Imbalance*.



The Great Imbalance

It is estimated that around 3% of missionaries in the world today are working among unreached people groups, while only about 1% of our “missions” giving is aimed at reaching the unreached. While we should not neglect peoples and places that are already reached, including our own communities, it should concern us that the church is virtually ignoring those with the least access to the gospel. This needs to change.

STRATUS

The countries you’ll be praying for over the next thirty days represent some of the hardest to reach peoples and places in the world. They have been chosen using Stratus, a free online tool from Radical that helps identify the world’s most urgent needs (see stratus.earth). Stratus takes into account a variety of spiritual and physical needs, including barriers that prevent the spread of the gospel, in order to rank the needs of countries in relation to other countries.

The End Goal

As you complete these thirty days of prayer, our hope is that you’ll be compelled to make praying for urgent needs among the nations a regular part of your life. We also hope you’ll be open to how the Lord might lead you to leverage your life—your resources, your time, your gifts, your education, your life experiences, etc.— for the sake of spreading the gospel among those who have never heard. Regardless of how the Lord leads, every follower of Christ should echo the cry of the psalmist: “Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!” (Psalm 67:3)

² These and similar statistics related to the Great Imbalance are based on the findings of Joshua Project, World Christian Encyclopedia, Status of Global Christianity, Perspectives, World Christian Trends, Atlas of World Christianity, The Traveling Team, and Operation World. Due to a variety of factors (security concerns, inconsistent reporting, etc.), it is difficult to be certain or overly precise about worldwide data related to missions and giving.

DAY 01

Great Commission Promises

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18–20

If we're honest, this passage known as the Great Commission can feel like an overwhelming task. The idea of making disciples among all the people groups of the earth—that's what Jesus means by "all nations"—seems impossible. And it is . . . humanly speaking. But Jesus never expected his church to carry out this command in its own strength or according to its own wisdom.

Just before sending out his disciples, Jesus assured them that he had been given "all authority in heaven and on earth." That means the "nations" among whom we are to make disciples are ultimately under the authority of Jesus. Regardless of the barriers and obstacles that stand in our way, whether they be spiritual or physical, nothing is outside of Christ's sovereign control. The nations belong to him.

Then, to bolster our faith even more, Jesus also promises us his very presence

in this mission. The One who was called "Immanuel" at his birth, meaning "God with us" (Matthew 1:23), promises to be with us "always, to the end of the age." What an astounding guarantee: as we go out to proclaim the gospel in our own neighborhoods and among all nations, the Lord of heaven and earth will be with us!

To be sure, Christ's promises do *not* mean that our mission will be easy. We have been told to expect hatred and opposition (John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12), and many of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are being persecuted even now. However, Christ's power and presence *do* mean that our mission cannot fail. Christ will build his church, and not even death and hell will prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

So let us pray with confidence—in Christ, not in ourselves—that disciples would be made among all nations.

Afghanistan



STRATUS INDEX
1

POPULATION

38,739,889

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

72

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

67

Largest Unreached People Group:

Afghan, Tajik
(10,585,000; 0.01% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

There are high levels of religious persecution and ongoing domestic and international conflicts.

Physical Needs:

Safety and security are serious concerns; there is a lack of basic sanitation services.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that gospel workers would be sent and that God would protect them as they proclaim Christ in this dangerous region.
- Ask God to sustain the faith and strengthen the witness of Afghan believers and churches.
- For the good of the Afghan people, pray for an end to the terrorism and violence in the country.



DAY 02

Praise the Lord, All Nations

Praise the LORD, all nations!

Extol him, all peoples!

*For great is his steadfast love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.*

Praise the Lord!

PSALM 117

It's so easy for our perspective on the world to become too limited. Our thoughts naturally run to our own lives, our own families, our own communities, and our own nation. And this is certainly understandable. We have important responsibilities where God has placed us, and there are needs everywhere we look. Not to mention, we only have so much bandwidth in terms of how we use our time, energy, and resources. But none of this should blind us to God's global purposes.

There are approximately more than 8 billion people in the world today, and God deserves the worship of every last one of them. Though Psalm 117 is the shortest of all the psalms, its message has worldwide ramifications.

The psalmist calls on "all" nations to praise the Lord and "all" peoples to extol him.

Included in the "all" nations and peoples are the over 3 billion people created in God's image (Genesis 1:26–27) and for his glory who remain unreached. God is worthy of their praise too, which should compel us to tell them what God has accomplished through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son. They desperately need to hear that God's "steadfast love" is "great" and that his "faithfulness" never comes to an end (Psalm 117:2).

In light of our tendency to be self-focused, let today's passage remind you to look up and look out. Look up to the God who is worthy of the praise of all peoples, and look out at the peoples who should be praising him but have still never heard. Then pray and act accordingly.

Yemen



STRATUS INDEX

3

POPULATION

29,681,819

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

30

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

21

Largest Unreached People Group:

Arab, Northern Yemeni
(12,990,000; 0% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

War and terrorism are common; human rights and the rule of law are relatively limited.

Physical Needs:

Poor nutrition causes high rates of underweight children; death rates due to disease in adults are high.



PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for an end to fighting and for gospel workers to find opportunities to serve within the country.
- Pray for the relatively few believers in the country to hold fast to the gospel. Ask God to make Scripture more readily available to Christians and non-Christians.
- Pray that a sufficient amount of food would be made available for the health and flourishing of all Yemeni people.



DAY 03

Image Bearers of God

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . ."

GENESIS 1:26

This verse is breath-taking, awe-inducing, humbling, sobering, and encouraging—to think that God has created you and me in *his* image! Now that obviously doesn't mean that we are little gods, but one of the things it does mean is that we have the capacity to relate to God in a way that trees and oceans and mountains and animals do not.

We can know God, enjoy God, relate to God, walk with God, and worship God. And this is true of every single person on the planet, regardless of culture, ethnicity, background, or any other trait. All people have been created with equal dignity in God's image. This has massive implications for many aspects of our lives, including the mission that Christ has given to his church.

If all people are image bearers of God, then we dare not ignore their spiritual needs simply because they are far from us or different from us culturally.

These individuals matter to God, so they should matter to us. This also means we should be concerned with their physical needs: how could we be indifferent to image bearers of God who are starving, persecuted, abused, or suffering in all kinds of ways?

We cannot as individuals, or even as local churches, address the spiritual and physical needs of all of more than 8 billion people in the world. But that doesn't mean we should do nothing. We should be compelled to consider the opportunities God *has* given us to meet urgent needs.

One simple way to grow in this area is through prayer. Ask God to give you greater compassion for those who are made in his image and to open your eyes to opportunities you have to serve them.

China

**POPULATION**

1,424,590,750

MAIN RELIGION

Non-Religious

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

544

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

443

Largest Unreached People Group:

Han Chinese, Xiang
(39,520,000; 2% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; internet content is subjected to censorship.

Physical Needs:

There is a lack of basic sanitation services; human rights are not protected and the rule of law is not enforced.

 **PRAYER POINTS**

- Pray that Chinese believers would persevere in the face of persecution. Ask God to strengthen them with confidence in their future hope.
- Pray for churches in China to be willing to take the gospel to the many unreached people of China.
- Pray that the government would end its abuse of the rights of citizens. Ask God to remove leaders who seek to hinder the spread of the gospel and bring harm on the people.



DAY 04

A Blessing to All the Families of the Earth

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

GENESIS 12:1-3

God's plan to bless all nations did not begin with the modern missions movement, nor was it a new strategy dreamed up by the early church. From all eternity God planned to redeem a people for himself from among all the peoples of the earth, and we see that plan being worked out from the earliest chapters of the Bible.

God commanded man to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth with God's righteous rule (Genesis 1:28). But as a result of sin (Genesis 3), people came together to make a name for themselves by building a tower up into the heavens. God responded by confusing their language and scattering them across the earth (Genesis 11). Gratefully, though, that wasn't God's final word to the various people groups of the earth.

God promised to bless "all the families of the earth" through a man named Abraham (originally Abram), and he would do this by making Abraham into a "great nation" (Genesis 12:2-3). This great nation, Israel, would be a conduit of worldwide blessing, for it was through Israel that Christ came. He was the Jewish Messiah and the promised son from Abraham's line (Matthew 1:1), the one who would provide salvation for both Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 3:8-9).

The blessing of Abraham continues to extend to the nations today as the church carries out Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). This means that God's blessing was never intended to center on us or stop with us. It was intended to spread *through* us. We are to be conduits of God's blessing, proclaiming the gospel of Christ to all the families of the earth.

Sudan



STRATUS INDEX

5

POPULATION

43,798,290

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

162

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

131

Largest Unreached People Group:

Beja, Bedawi (2,271,000; 0% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; there are high levels of violence perpetrated by the government.

Physical Needs:

There are high levels of refugees and internally displaced persons; poor nutrition causes high rates of underweight children.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that violence perpetrated by the government would end and that God would sustain the faith of Sudanese believers facing persecution.
- Pray for churches in Sudan to reach out to refugees with the hope of the gospel.
- Pray that basic freedoms would be provided for all citizens and that enough food would be available to sustain them.



DAY 05

Replacing Prejudice with Mercy

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

JONAH 3:10

The prophet Jonah initially refused God's command to go and warn the Ninevites that God was going to punish them for their sin (Jonah 1:1-3). Like other Israelites, Jonah was probably not very fond of the Ninevites, a people associated with evil. However, before we become too critical of Jonah, we need to search our own hearts for prejudices, and even hatred, toward people groups that God loves. Gratefully, our lack of compassion is no match for God's mercy.

God overcame Jonah's reluctance by sending a great storm and then a great fish to swallow him. When Jonah finally went and proclaimed God's message to Nineveh, the people believed God and a fast was called for the entire city (3:5). God saw Nineveh's repentance and "relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them." What a powerful picture of God's mercy among a people who warranted his wrath!

Like Jonah, we may be reluctant to take the gospel to certain peoples and places, particularly those that are hostile to our message or to the safety of our own people group. But hostile peoples also need to hear from God. They need to know that they have sinned against a God who is holy and just. They need to know that there is a final judgment coming. And they also need to know that God is "rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4). This is the same mercy that was needed to cover *our* sin. We should therefore be eager to proclaim that for everyone who turns from their sin and trusts in Christ, God will relent of his wrath and save them.

No one's sin is greater than God's mercy. Christ's death is sufficient to cover the Ninevites and every other people group on the planet.

North Korea



STRATUS INDEX
20

POPULATION

25,654,157

MAIN RELIGION

Non-Religious

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

5

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

2

Largest Unreached People Group:

Korean (25,208,000; 1.56% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

There are high levels of religious persecution; individual rights and freedoms are heavily impinged.

Physical Needs:

Poverty and a lack of employment are massive problems; there are high levels of violence perpetrated by the government.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for the perseverance of persecuted Christians in labor camps and throughout the country. Ask God to uphold their faith and empower their witness.
- Pray that more opportunities would be available for gospel workers to enter the country and make Christ known.
- Pray for God to replace the unjust and cruel government of North Korea for the sake of the gospel and for the good of all citizens.



DAY 06

They Must Hear

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? . . .

ROMANS 10:13-15

If we work our way from the end of these three verses back to the beginning, we get a clear picture of how the gospel spreads:

- The Lord sends people to proclaim the gospel (v. 15a)
- The gospel is proclaimed and people hear it (v. 14b)
- The gospel is believed by some and they call on the name of the Lord (v. 14a)
- The Lord saves all who call on his name (v. 13)

That’s God’s plan for getting the gospel to all people in the world. And while it sounds fairly simple, there are still over 3 billion people in the world who have not heard. Many of them do not even know a Christian. That’s one of the things that drove Paul to write the letter we know of as the book of Romans. He was encouraging the church at Rome to support his efforts to take the gospel to those in Spain who had never heard it (Romans 15:24).

Paul essentially asks, “How are these people going to hear and believe the gospel if someone doesn’t go and preach to them?”

We need to ask that same question today, particularly given how many people live and die without ever hearing the gospel. Based on what Paul has taught earlier in Romans, we know that those who die without hearing the gospel will spend an eternity paying the penalty for their sin against God (Romans 1:18–32; 6:23). It should be intolerable to us that there are so many in this condition. More than that, it should compel us to pray and to ask God what role we should play in the spread of the gospel.

How will people believe if they have never heard?

STRATUS INDEX
10

POPULATION

20,156,232

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

74

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

45

Largest Unreached People Group:

Bambara (6,026,000; 1.1% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Living conditions are difficult; the literacy level is low.

Physical Needs:

Infant mortality rates are high; life expectancy, education, and purchasing power are compromised.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God would send, sustain, and strengthen gospel workers in this difficult country.
- Pray that God would open the hearts of many Muslims to follow Christ.
- Pray that God would mercifully provide for the health of babies and for all citizens whose life expectancy is low. Ask him to open the door for Christian organizations to care for vulnerable people.



Where Christ is Not Known

... from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum, I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ. I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand." This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.

ROMANS 15:19-24

It's astounding to hear the apostle Paul say that he was finished with his work in certain regions. He is talking about the regions where he had already proclaimed the gospel, namely, "from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum." But what could Paul mean by that? Surely not everybody was a follower of Christ in those regions? Did the church not need to be strengthened? And were there no more needs to be met?

There were, of course, many unmet needs. Yet, Paul had proclaimed the gospel and people had come to Christ and gathered together into churches. So there were churches in those regions that were making disciples and multiplying into other churches. Gospel work was happening. But that wasn't the case in Spain. Paul wanted to go to Spain because people there had not yet heard the gospel and there were no churches making disciples.

His "ambition" was to make Christ known where Christ was not yet known. There are many places in the world today where the gospel, by God's grace, has been proclaimed. People have become followers of Jesus and they have gathered together in churches. Many places in North America are like this, and there is certainly much work left to do. At the same time, God calls out certain people to take the gospel where it has not yet gone. We often refer to such people as missionaries. These are men and women who cross cultures in order to proclaim the gospel in a place or among a people where Christ is not yet known.

Our churches ought to pray regularly that God would raise up missionaries among us. If God does not lead us to go, then it is our role—and privilege—to pray for and support these men and women for the sake of Christ's glory among all nations.

Somalia

**POPULATION**

15,768,471

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

22

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

20

Largest Unreached People Group:

Somali (11,175,000; 0.01% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; individual rights and freedoms are heavily impinged.

Physical Needs:

Poverty and lack of employment opportunities are massive problems; the overall adult literacy rate is low.

 **PRAYER POINTS**

- Pray that God would sustain the faith of Somali believers and bless their witness as they face immense pressure and opposition for their faith. Ask him to increase adult literacy so that more Somalis might be able to read God's Word.
- Pray that God would overthrow the government's attempts to perpetrate violence against Christians and all citizens.
- Pray that God would provide food and opportunities for employment for the Somali people.



DAY 08

A Day of Reckoning for All Nations

For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.

OBADIAH 1:15

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament, but its message has massive global implications. The prophet Obadiah tells of a day, “the day of the LORD,” when “all the nations” will give an account to God for what they have done. This is a sobering reality as we consider how many peoples and places in the world today don’t have access to the only message that can save them from the consequences of their sin.

In Obadiah’s day, God announced his plans to punish the Edomites because of how they had treated Israel. Instead of assisting God’s people when Babylon invaded, the Edomites apparently gloated over the demise of Israel and even helped capture those who were fleeing. God warned the Edomites that they would be held accountable and that their deeds would “return on [their] own head.”

The same thing will be true of nations today who reject the one true God in order to worship idols and practice false religions. The Lord will judge them in

his holiness and justice. That’s why the nations desperately need God’s mercy. That’s true for you and me and for every people group on the planet. And it’s why the gospel is such good news.

John 3:16 tells us that God “so loved the world,” including all the peoples and nations of the world, that he “gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” That’s the message the church has the privilege of proclaiming.

Let this word of impending judgment from the book of Obadiah be a reminder of why the church’s mission is so urgent. God’s judgments throughout history point us to the final judgment at Christ’s return when all people will stand before him. May this reality drive us to our knees.

Iran



STRATUS INDEX

13

POPULATION

83,864,566

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

94

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

84**Largest Unreached People Group:**

Persian (37,677,000; 1.9% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; freedom of expression is limited.

Physical Needs:

Social divisions are creating disadvantages for certain ethnicities; there is a lack of basic sanitation services.



PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that many Iranians would see the error of Islam and turn to Christ.
- Pray that Christians who are persecuted for their faith would be willing to suffer for Christ's sake.
- Pray that the unity of the church would stand in contrast to any discrimination that certain ethnicities face in the country.



Praying for Laborers

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

MATTHEW 9:36-38

Sometimes we get so focused on ourselves that we become indifferent to spiritual needs right around us. How much more is this the case when it comes to peoples and places on the other side of the world. Even when we are concerned, we are often unsure about how to respond.

As well as any other passage in Scripture, today's passage teaches us a right response to peoples and places that have little or no access to the gospel. Two things in particular are worth noting.

First, as Jesus went about teaching, preaching, and healing, he wasn't indifferent or frustrated at the crowds. No, he had "compassion" on them because he saw them as "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." If compassion is the right response to unbelievers who do have access to the gospel, then how could we not have compassion on those who have never

even heard the name of Christ? In certain places in the world, you can ask people what they know about Jesus and they'll have no idea who you're talking about. You might as well be talking about someone in a nearby village. Yet these are people that Jesus has compassion for. He loves them and desires their salvation.

Second, notice what Jesus tells his disciples to pray for. They are to ask the "Lord of the harvest" for "laborers" to be sent out into the harvest of lost souls. This should be part of our prayer for every unreached people group or place. We should ask the Lord to stir the hearts of his people and send them to areas of urgent spiritual need.

Eventually we want indigenous believers making disciples and multiplying churches, but until then, we ought to pray that the Lord would send workers from near and far to make Christ known.

Niger

STRATUS INDEX

19

POPULATION

24,128,102

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

37

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

29

Largest Unreached People Group:

Hausa (11,377,000; 1.6% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Living conditions are difficult; women often receive no schooling.

Physical Needs:

Life expectancy, education, and purchasing power are compromised; there are high levels of multifaceted poverty.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for healthy churches to be planted among the unreached people groups in the country.
- Pray for opportunities for Christians to help provide quality education as a ministry.
- Pray that Christian relief organizations and others would be able to provide for the needs of many people in Niger.



DAY 10

Anonymous Church Planters

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

ACTS 11:19-21

The church at Antioch was one of the most influential churches in the history of Christianity. This is the church that sent out Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3), and eventually churches were planted all over the Roman Empire. The circumstances of how the church at Antioch was planted remind us that God's designs for the spread of the gospel are often very different from ours.

For starters, the church at Antioch began as a result of persecution. When Stephen, the first recorded Christian martyr, was stoned (see Acts 7), believers were "scattered," and they went out proclaiming the gospel. This reminds us that the barrier of persecution cannot stop God's redemptive purposes. In fact, God often carries out his purposes *through* persecution. Therefore, even as we pray for God to bring relief to our persecuted brothers and sisters, we should also ask him to use their trials for the spread of his gospel.

Another fascinating aspect of the church at Antioch is that we don't know any names of the church planters. We're simply told that "some of them" from Cyprus and Cyrene came "preaching the Lord Jesus." As a result, a "great number" of people in Antioch became Christians, but it wasn't due to the special qualities of these anonymous church planters. It was because "the hand of the Lord was with them."

God is still using unknown, everyday people to carry out his work in hard to reach places. We may never know their names or their stories this side of heaven, but they are testifying to Christ at the risk of their reputations, their jobs, their families, and their very lives. So let us pray that God would use them (and us) much like he did the church planters in Antioch. God has designed the gospel to spread through ordinary people.

Morocco

**POPULATION**

36,819,345

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

31

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

27

Largest Unreached People Group:

Moroccan, Arabic-Speaking
(23,940,000; 0.08% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Individual rights and freedoms are heavily impinged; freedom of expression is limited.

Physical Needs:

Many people lack safe drinking water; post-secondary education opportunities are lacking.

 **PRAYER POINTS**

- Pray that the government would allow for greater freedoms for the sake of the spread of the gospel. Ask God to give believers boldness as they face opposition for their faith.
- Pray for healthy churches to be planted among the unreached people groups of Morocco.
- Pray that God would provide safe drinking water for all citizens.



DAY 11

The Unreached Are Not Innocent

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Romans 1:18-23

We should have compassion on all who are not followers of Christ, and that certainly applies to the unreached. The fact that there are people who have no access to the message of a Savior who came to redeem sinners and give them eternal life should break our hearts. However, the fact that a person lacks gospel access does not mean that they stand innocent before God. A failure to grasp this truth undercuts the urgency of our mission.

The apostle Paul drives home the point in Romans 1-3 that, apart from Christ, all people, without exception, stand guilty before God. This includes those who do not have access to the words that God has spoken. These people “suppress the truth” despite the fact that God makes his “invisible attributes” known to all people through the things he has made. Every human being is therefore left “without excuse.”

Instead of honoring and thanking God, people become “futile” in their thoughts and exchange the glory of God for the glory of created things. This is as true for the unreached as it is for anyone else, and it’s why they stand under the “wrath of God.”

The spiritual state of the unreached makes our mission all the more urgent and critical. The church is not merely offering charity to needy people: we are proclaiming the only message that God uses to rescue people from hell. Eternity is at stake. Of course, it is God who saves, and he alone is sovereign over all peoples. But he has ordained for his people to be the means by which his gospel is spread. That means we have an important role to play.

How does the spiritual state of the unreached affect the way you view the church’s mission? How might it affect the way you pray? What about the sacrifices you are willing to make for the spread of the gospel?

Iraq



POPULATION

40,047,594

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

35

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

25

Largest Unreached People Group:

Arab, Iraqi (16,045,000; 0.02% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

There is a low level of state-wide peace; geographical remoteness limits the flow of information.

Physical Needs:

The government is unable to protect its citizens; many people lack safe drinking water.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that churches would endure and continue to boldly proclaim Christ, regardless of the cost.
- Pray for peace in this war-torn country so that the church might flourish and citizens might be protected.
- Pray for the removal of government leaders that carry out evil against the people of Iraq.



DAY 12

The Power of God for Salvation

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

ROMANS 1:16

The church is constantly tempted to tweak the message of the gospel or to rely on something other than the gospel in order to carry out its mission. When it comes to reaching the unreached, the size of the task can make us feel as if we need something in addition to the gospel. For those who are eager to see immediate, tangible results, taking the time to learn a foreign language in order to communicate the gospel may seem like too slow of a process. It can be tempting to rely on techniques or our own strategies rather than the message of Christ crucified. Today's verse helps us see these approaches for what they are—unbelief.

The gospel is the "power of God for salvation." Regardless of the difficulties and barriers that we face, we can trust in God's power as we proclaim the message of salvation. Paul summarizes that message as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).

This is the message that our friends and families need to hear, and it's the message that the hardest to reach people groups need to hear.

Reaching the unreached will undoubtedly require strategizing, planning, and some creativity. But, gratefully, we don't have to rely on our own power or wisdom, nor do we have to come up with our own message. The gospel is sufficient to save anyone. Just as Paul wanted the church in Rome to know that the gospel was sufficient for both Jews and Gentiles, so we need to be reminded that the gospel is sufficient for every people group and every place. That's why Paul wasn't ashamed of it.

Let the sufficiency of the gospel shape your prayers for the unreached. This is the only message that saves.

Lebanon



POPULATION

6,770,941

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

26

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

8

Largest Unreached People Group:

Druze (299,000; 0.01% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Political turmoil and fighting in recent decades has led to instability in the country; more translation is needed for Scripture availability.

Physical Needs:

Many people lack safe drinking water; there are high levels of refugees and internally displaced peoples.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that Lebanese churches would take advantage of their current freedoms and proclaim the gospel boldly.
- Pray for peace in and around Lebanon for the sake of the flourishing of the church and the safety of all citizens.
- Pray that safe drinking water would be made available for all citizens. Ask God to use Christians to address this physical need as a way to point unbelievers to Christ.



DAY 13

Beautiful Feet

*How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."*

ISAIAH 52:7

There are few sights more beautiful than the majestic peaks of the Himalayas. They rise thousands upon thousands of feet into the air. In fact, if you stood on the highest mountain peak in the United States, you would still feel as if you were looking up from the bottom of a valley in the Himalayas. It's a glorious picture of grandeur and wonder, and it proclaims the glory of God (Romans 1:20).

However, as beautiful as the Himalayas are, you know what they don't do? They don't proclaim the gospel. As much as those mountains shout the greatness of God, they say nothing specific about Jesus, who came to save us from our sins. That's a privilege reserved for you and me and all who belong to Christ.

Some Christians mistakenly think that people can come to a saving knowledge of the truth based on what they see in creation.

All they need to do is respond to the light they've been given, and God will in turn provide them with more light. But this is not how God has designed for people to come to know him. There is a message that must be proclaimed, and it's a message of "peace," the peace that comes with salvation.

We have the privilege of bringing people the greatest news in the world—that they can be forgiven of all their sins and reconciled to God through Jesus Christ! No other part of God's creation can do this. And though it is often a costly and difficult task, it is an unspeakable privilege to bear witness to such a great Savior. It's little wonder, then, that Isaiah uses the word "beautiful" to describe the feet of those who bring this good news.

Russia

**POPULATION****144,616,325****MAIN RELIGION****Christian****TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:****185****UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:****118****Largest Unreached People Group:**

Tatar (5,416,000; 0.49% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; people are being denied equal protection under the law.

Physical Needs:

Suicide rates are high; many people lack safe drinking water.

 **PRAYER POINTS**

- Pray that God would empower the church to persevere in faithfulness and bear witness to the gospel despite pressure from the government.
- Pray that Christians and churches in Russia would be willing to take the gospel to the unreached people groups in the country.
- Pray that many who feel suicidal or who live in despair would come to know the hope that only the gospel can provide.



The Message We Proclaim

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

LUKE 24:44-47

Luke's version of the Great Commission has a lot to teach us about the message Christ has given us to proclaim. At least three things are worth noting.

First, our message centers on Jesus Christ and what he has accomplished for our salvation. After making the astounding claim that he was the fulfillment of the "Scriptures" (a reference to the Old Testament), the risen Christ opened the minds of his disciples to understand what had been written about him. In particular, it had been foretold that he would "suffer and on the third day rise from the dead." The core of the gospel, then, is the death and resurrection of Christ (see also 1 Corinthians 15:3-5). Our proclamation is "in his name."

Second, our message calls for a response. According to Jesus, we are to proclaim "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Biblical repentance requires turning from your sins and putting your trust in Christ. This is what Jesus called for in his preaching (Mark 1:15), and it's the response his apostles called for as they proclaimed the gospel (Acts 2:38). So also today we urge people to repent and believe in Christ so that they might receive the "forgiveness of sins."

Third, our message has a worldwide scope. Though the earthly ministry of Jesus was focused primarily on his fellow Jews in Israel (with a few notable exceptions), he commanded his disciples to proclaim the gospel to "all nations." All the peoples of the earth need to hear this good news.

India

STRATUS INDEX

18

POPULATION

1,373,941,161

MAIN RELIGION

Hinduism

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

2,717

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

2,445**Largest Unreached People Group:**

Shaikh (85,376,000; 0% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Domestic and international conflicts are ongoing; there are very few gospel workers in proportion to the massive number of people who are unreached.

Physical Needs:

Inadequate sanitation services are leading to high rates of death; poor nutrition causes high rates of underweight children.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for gospel workers inside and outside the country to be sent to the massive unreached people groups in India.
- Pray for an end to conflicts that make the spread of the gospel more difficult and threaten the safety of Indian citizens.
- Pray for the provision of clean drinking water for all and adequate nutrition for children.



DAY 15

Away with This Man from the Earth

Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live."

ACTS 22:22

Just let this scene soak in. An angry mob had just attacked the apostle Paul based on the false charge that he had defiled the temple by bringing a Gentile into it (Acts 21:27–36). When some Roman soldiers prevented the mob from killing Paul, he asked for their permission to address the people. The crowd got quiet and listened as Paul testified about how Jesus had changed his life. But everything changed when Paul came to the part of his story where Jesus called him to make the gospel known among all the nations of the earth, i.e., the Gentiles.

At this point the crowd shouted, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live." In other words, "Kill him!"

It's difficult for many of us to imagine this kind of response. However, we have brothers and sisters in Christ who are even now facing something similar. Their governments, their communities, or even their own families, are saying,

"Away with these people—they shouldn't be allowed to live!"

As soon as a North Korean believer says anything about Jesus and the government finds out, they are sent off to a labor camp where they will likely languish until they die. In Somalia, an individual may be persecuted or killed by his own family for professing Christ. And the list goes on and on. This is where we need to be reminded of Christ's words to his disciples in Mark 13:13: "And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."

Let us pray, then, for our persecuted brothers and sisters who are right now identifying with Christ at the cost of their lives. May God provide for, protect, strengthen, uphold, and embolden them. And as we pray for their boldness and continual dependence on Christ, let us also pray that we will be bold in sharing the gospel, regardless of the cost.

Saudi Arabia



POPULATION

34,736,522

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

44

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

28

Largest Unreached People Group:

Arab, Saudi - Najdi
(13,821,000; 0.12% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; people are heavily monitored by the government.

Physical Needs:

There are high levels of violence perpetrated by the government; there is insufficient water availability.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that followers of Christ would endure in faith and hope as they face pressure and opposition from the government.
- Pray that many Muslims in Saudi Arabia would come to know the truth about Jesus Christ and place their faith in him.
- Pray that unjust leaders would be removed and that citizens would be free from government oppression and violence.



DAY 16

The Language Barrier

Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.

GENESIS 11:7

Genesis 11 tells the story of man's disobedience to God's original command to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). Instead of spreading God's glory, mankind decided to stay in one place and build a tower up to heaven. He wanted to make a name for himself rather than glorify God's name. It was the epitome of sinful pride.

In today's verse we read about the Lord's response: he confused man's language and thus scattered various people over the face of the earth. The inability to communicate made it difficult for people to form relationships with one another, effectively separating and dividing them. The world is still divided today—over 17,000 people groups have been identified—and language continues to be one of the primary reasons.

If we are going to see all nations, or people groups, reached with the gospel, then there's a language barrier that will have to be overcome.

The gospel still needs to be proclaimed and translated into thousands of different languages. Sadly, many unreached people groups lack a full (or, in some cases, partial) translation of the Bible in their language. Even if they did respond in faith to a gospel presentation, they wouldn't be able to experience the growth that comes from regularly reading God's Word.

We ought to pray that the Bible would be translated into every known language. This requires people who are willing to learn the language of an unreached people group and then do the difficult work of translating the Bible into that new language. While this kind of work is time-consuming and often receives little recognition, it is worth it if others have the ability to hear from God in the pages of Scripture.

Nepal

STRATUS INDEX

21

POPULATION

29,014,678

MAIN RELIGION

Hinduism

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

285

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

275**Largest Unreached People Group:**

Chhetri (4,191,000; 0% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Many people are isolated geographically; living conditions are extremely difficult.

Physical Needs:

Poor nutrition causes high rates of underweight children; many people lack safe drinking water.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that many gospel workers would be sent to the remote villages of the Himalayas. Ask God to strengthen their hope and resolve in this difficult part of the world.
- Pray that God would bless the witness of indigenous believers in Nepal and strengthen their churches.
- Pray that God would provide food and clean water for all citizens. Ask him to open doors for Christians and churches to address these needs for the sake of the gospel.



DAY 17

Unquenchable Fire, Urgent Message

His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

LUKE 3:17

Many Jews wondered whether John the Baptist was the promised Messiah, but John kept denying it. He put the spotlight squarely on Jesus, and in the process, John gave us a sobering and unforgettable image of the One who stands in judgment of all men.

In today's passage Jesus is described as having a "winnowing fork," a tool used to separate the wheat from the chaff. The wheat, representing those who belong to Christ, would be gathered into the barn, while the chaff, representing those who reject Christ, would be burned with "unquenchable fire." The implication is clear: everyone's eternity hangs on his or her response to Jesus.

Those who trust in Jesus are welcomed into his Father's house for eternity. As a gift of grace, they have eternal life, the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and adoption into his family. On the other hand, those who fail to trust in Jesus as their Savior will be burned with "unquenchable fire," a reference to their eternal destination in hell.

Scripture frequently uses the image of fire to talk about hell (Matthew 3:10; 5:22; 13:40; 18:8-9; Mark 9:43-48), causing some people to wonder whether hell involves literal fire. Even if, as some people claim, Jesus is using fire as a symbol, that doesn't make this truth less sobering. "Unquenchable fire" is clearly not a symbol for a nice summer vacation. Symbolic language often points us to realities that can't adequately be captured with words. Hell is unquestionably a horrifying place.

The reality of God's wrath in hell is particularly sobering when we consider how many people in the world do not have access to the only message by which they can be saved. This should add urgency to our missions efforts and fervency to our prayers. We should long and live for all peoples to know the Savior who "delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

Egypt



STRATUS INDEX

49



POPULATION

102,255,565

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

42

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

25

Largest Unreached People Group:

Algerian, Arabic-Speaking
(1,840,000; 0.01% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; there are high levels of violence perpetrated by the government.

Physical Needs:

There is a lack of basic sanitation services; there are high rates of prescription opioid abuse.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for faithful pastors to be raised up and for churches to be planted among some of the hardest to reach people groups.
- Pray for the endurance of followers of Christ as they face opposition for their faith.
- Pray for God to open up opportunities for churches and Christian organizations to meet physical needs in Egypt.



DAY 18

Their Minds Have Been Blinded

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:4-6

Why don't people see the beauty and glory of Christ in the gospel? Because the "god of this world," which is how the apostle Paul refers to Satan in today's passage, has blinded the minds of unbelievers. Knowing this truth should give us compassion for those who are now living in spiritual darkness. It should also affect the way we pray for the advance of the gospel among all nations.

When we pray for unreached people groups, we should pray knowing that Satan is blinding their minds. Even when they do come in contact with the gospel, they won't believe unless God intervenes through the power of his Spirit. This reminds us that the church's mission involves a spiritual battle, and the stakes are eternal.

Gratefully, God is able to overcome the blinding work of Satan.

Just as God spoke in the very beginning and light shone out of darkness (Genesis 1:3), so he shines in our hearts to give "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This spiritual sight-giving work is something only God can do. So where do we fit in this cosmic battle?

According to today's passage, our role is to "proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord," which is what we do when we proclaim the gospel. Therefore, let's not ignore the battle by refusing to say anything about who Jesus is and what he has done to save people from their sins and give them eternal life with God. Satan would love that. Instead, let's open our mouths to speak, and as we do, let's pray that God would open the hearts of unbelievers among all nations to see the glory of Christ.

Uzbekistan



POPULATION

33,383,632

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

59

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

34

Largest Unreached People Group:

Uzbek, Northern
(27,199,000; 0.01% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; people are heavily monitored by the government.

Physical Needs:

A high percentage of the population lives in poverty; post-secondary education opportunities are lacking.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Uzbeks to see the glory of Christ in the gospel. Ask God to bless the witness of churches in the country.
- Pray that believers would be bold and wise in light of pressures from the government and others who are hostile to Christ.
- Pray for God to provide for the needs of the poor of Uzbekistan. Ask him to use this physical provision to open doors for the spread of the gospel.



DAY 19

Weeping Over the Lost

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it . . .

LUKE 19:41

Jerusalem was full of people who had rejected Jesus and who would, in a short time, call for him to be killed in the most cruel way imaginable—the cross. So why would Jesus weep over this city?

Jesus longed for Jerusalem to know his Father's love, which is why he was going to the cross in the first place. He cared deeply for them, and so their rejection caused him great sorrow. Christ's profound compassion should not only shape the way we think about our unbelieving neighbors but also the nations that are far from us. Start by asking yourself some questions . . .

When was the last time I wept over someone who wasn't a Christian? Or, to take it a step further, when was the last time I wept over an enemy? Are there peoples and places around the world that I am less motivated to pray for because they pose a security threat to the church or to my own country?

Am I more concerned with comfort and safety than with the eternal good of people groups who reject the gospel? If we're honest, these questions can be convicting. We're all tempted to focus on our own comfort and prioritize our own interests. That's why we need God to continually work in our hearts so that his glory becomes the motivation for all that we do. Only then will we long for others to glorify God, including those who are hostile to Christ and his church.

Let us plead, then, for God to give us the compassion of Christ for the lost. As those who have received the riches of God's mercy in Jesus, we ought to be eager to make that mercy known, even to those who seem most resistant.

Indonesia

**POPULATION**

272,174,368

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

789

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

236

Largest Unreached People Group:

Sunda (37,942,000; 0.05% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; there are currently very few gospel workers.

Physical Needs:

Death rates are high due to disease; poor nutrition causes high rates of underweight children.

 **PRAYER POINTS**

- Pray that many in this heavily Muslim country would see the emptiness of Islam and acknowledge their need for Christ.
- Pray for gospel workers to be sent and for churches to be planted among people groups that are currently unreached.
- Pray for the provision of sufficient nutrition for children and all citizens of Indonesia.



DAY 20

The Fields are White for Harvest

Do you not say, "There are yet four months, then comes the harvest"? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.

JOHN 4:35

These words from Jesus to his disciples in John 4 come just after he had spoken with a Samaritan woman who had five ex-husbands and was now living with a man who was not her husband. Knowing the depth of this woman's sin—even before she admitted it!—Jesus sat there by a well and offered her living water that would quench her thirst forever (vv. 14–18).

Christ's interaction with this woman was remarkable not only because men did not typically initiate such conversations with women at this time but also because this woman was a Samaritan, a people that Jews wanted nothing to do with. Yet Jesus took the initiative to address her greatest need.

The woman responded by running back into town and urging the people to come see Jesus for themselves (v. 29). The disciples, on the other hand, had merely brought Jesus food to eat.

They didn't realize that his "food" was to accomplish the mission his Father had given him (v. 34). And they couldn't see that, in light of Christ's coming, the fields were already "white for harvest" (v. 35). God was gathering a people for himself, and this people wouldn't be limited to ethnic Jews. Even Samaritans were now coming to see Jesus (v. 30), and some would soon believe in him (vv. 39–42).

Today God is continuing to gather a people for himself from among all nations. The fields are still "white for harvest." But is this how we see the world? Are our churches eager to see the gospel proclaimed among all nations, even among those who, culturally speaking, would be considered our "enemies"?

May God be pleased to open the eyes of many in our day to see a harvest of souls among the nations.

Myanmar



POPULATION

54,310,634

MAIN RELIGION

Buddhism

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

149

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

53

Largest Unreached People Group:

Burmese (31,156,000; 0.08% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; individual rights and freedoms are heavily impinged.

Physical Needs:

Basic sanitation services are lacking; there are high levels of refugees and internally displaced persons.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that churches and Christians in Myanmar would have an effective gospel witness despite the lack of religious freedom.
- Pray that Christians, churches, and organizations would minister to the spiritual and physical needs of refugees and displaced persons.
- Pray that the government of Myanmar would rule for the good of all citizens, providing them with equal protection under the law.



DAY 21

God Sovereignly Moves the Peoples

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. . . .

ACTS 17:26-27

In his address to the people of Athens, the apostle Paul gives us an incredible description of the sovereignty of God over all the people groups in the world. God made “every nation” from one man, Adam, which means all people groups are part of the same race, the human race. We have different ethnicities, languages, and cultural backgrounds, but all people groups are made by God. And God has even determined “allotted periods” and the “boundaries” of where they live.

Consider what this means for today’s refugee crisis and the unprecedented movements of peoples across the globe. Even in a world tainted by sin, where a variety of sinful factors cause the displacement of peoples, God is ultimately sovereign. And he is able to use all these things to draw people to himself.

When you look at the world through this lens, you realize that the movements of peoples is not an accident. There is a sovereign God who desires all people groups to know him, and sometimes he brings these people groups right to our doorstep. Whether it’s international students, families fleeing violence in their home country, or simply individuals looking to make a better living, the “nations” are right around many of us.

So let’s take advantage of these sovereignly-orchestrated opportunities to make disciples of all nations right where we live. This means being alert to those of different ethnicities in our communities and being intentional about sharing the gospel with them. Oh, that God would be pleased to save them and perhaps even use some of them to take the gospel back to their own people group! The movements of the peoples might be one way that God provides unprecedented gospel access in our day.

Syria



STRATUS INDEX
8

POPULATION

17,382,318

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

38

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

19

Largest Unreached People Group:

Kurd, Kurmanji (1,418,000; 0.06% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Domestic and international conflicts are ongoing; human rights are not protected and the rule of law is not enforced.

Physical Needs:

People face high risks of genocide, mass killing, or violent repression due to ethnic tension; there are high levels of refugees and internally displaced peoples.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that violence in this country would cease for the safety of all citizens and for the sake of the spread of the gospel.
- Pray for the safety of refugees and that God would bring them in contact with the gospel.
- Pray that the government would respect human rights and that evil leaders would be removed.



DAY 22

Zealous for His Name to Be Known

But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

EXODUS 9:16

Here we get a glimpse into the heart and purpose of why God raised up Pharaoh, an evil ruler who enslaved God's people in Egypt. Pharaoh didn't know or fear God, but he was used to proclaim God's name in all the earth.

This may sound strange to us if we're accustomed to thinking of God's purposes for the nations only in terms of specific programs in the church. We might assume missions has nothing to do with us. However, God orchestrates all of history to make his name and his glory known among all nations.

This is why he raises up one ruler and puts down another. And it's why Christ taught us to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9-10).

When we consider realities like the number of unreached people groups (over 7,000) or the widespread persecution of Christians in the world, it's easy for us to feel overwhelmed or even hopeless. However, today's verse reminds us that God is working all things to accomplish his global purposes. Even a ruler like Pharaoh served to put God's power on display as God redeemed his people from slavery in Egypt. That redemption was a picture of a much greater rescue that God accomplished through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son.

In light of God's power and his purposes, we can be confident regardless of our circumstances and despite Satan's attempts to keep the gospel from going forward. God is more zealous than we are that his name would be known in all the earth. So let us pray with confidence.

Laos


 A circular graphic with a red and white border. Inside, there is a small Stratus logo (a circle with a diagonal line) above the text "STRATUS INDEX" and the number "35" in a large, bold font.

STRATUS INDEX
35

POPULATION

7,236,315

MAIN RELIGION

Buddhism

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

127

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

106

Largest Unreached People Group:

Lao (3,398,000; 2% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Individual rights and freedoms are heavily impinged; there are high levels of violence perpetrated by the government.

Physical Needs:

Child labor rates are high; many people lack safe drinking water.


 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God would open the hearts of the people of Laos to see that only the gospel provides hope in the midst of their sin and suffering.
- Pray that the government would respect the rights and freedoms of all citizens. Ask God to protect and preserve the churches in Laos.
- Pray that children would be treated with care and that basic physical provisions, like clean drinking water, would be available to all citizens.



DAY 23

The Obedience of the Peoples

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

GENESIS 49:10

Before his death, Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, gathered his twelve sons to bless them and to let them know what their respective futures would hold. When he came to Judah, he made an astounding promise: Judah would have a continuing royal line and “tribute” would come to him. But this would not be the ordinary tribute paid to kings.

A king from Judah’s line would receive “the obedience of the peoples.” The “peoples” here refers to people groups, or nations, spread across the world. Seeing this promise fulfilled takes us from the first book in the Bible to the last. In Revelation 5:5, the risen and exalted Christ is called the “the Lion from the tribe of Judah.” Fittingly, he receives worship from all the peoples of the earth because he has ransomed them by his own blood (Revelation 5:9–10).

This is what gives us confidence as we seek to make disciples among all the people groups of the world.

If we’re honest, proclaiming the gospel to certain people groups can seem daunting. They are not only different from us culturally and far from us geographically, but they are often resistant to our message. We may even lose our lives trying to reach them.

However, God’s promise in today’s passage should give us confidence. Regardless of the barriers that stand in the way, we can rest assured that they will be overcome. We can pray—and give and go!—knowing that the King from Judah’s line will receive the worship he is due. God’s promise will be fulfilled. The obedience of the peoples belongs to Christ.

Turkey



STRATUS INDEX
25

POPULATION

84,248,750

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

68

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

45

Largest Unreached People Group:

Turk (59,258,000; 0% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

There are high levels of violence perpetrated by the government; individual rights and freedoms are heavily impinged.

Physical Needs:

Social divisions are creating disadvantages for certain ethnicities; there are high levels of refugees and internally displaced peoples.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God would open the hearts of many Muslims in Turkey to receive the gospel. Ask him to give them the strength to withstand opposition for the sake of Christ.
- Pray for churches to minister to those who are discriminated against or neglected due to their ethnicity or social status.
- Pray for an end to the government's violent actions toward citizens. Ask God to appoint leaders who will act for the good of the people.



DAY 24

The Worst Kind of Famine

*“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord God,
“When I will send a famine on the land—
not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,
but of hearing the words of the Lord.
They shall wander from sea to sea,
and from north to east;
they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord,
but they shall not find it.”*

AMOS 8:11-12

Israel had mistreated and oppressed the poor and needy in the days of the prophet Amos, and in response the Lord announced that he would punish them by sending a famine. But this was not the kind of famine that we typically think of—it was worse. Israel would be without the word of the Lord.

As painful as it is to have no food or water, to not hear from the Lord is even more devastating. It’s the ultimate picture of judgment because it cuts us off from any opportunity of redemption. Most of us can’t even imagine being in this condition.

We have the privilege of reading God’s Word whenever we want, and we have God’s Spirit living within us and illuminating his truth for us. What a gift to know God through the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments!

As sinners deserving of God’s wrath, and as those who are born spiritually blind, we would be totally in the dark and

completely hopeless apart from God’s Word. Imagine living in this world of evil and wickedness and injustice without any word from God. Imagine not knowing who God is, how to get to know him, or what hope he has provided for us in the gospel.

This is similar to the situation the unreached find themselves in today. Although many of these people groups have urgent physical needs, sometimes due to a physical famine, food and water are not their greatest need. They have little or no access to the gospel, which means they have no hope of coming to a saving knowledge of God.

Oh, how crucial it is that God’s Word be translated into more and more languages so that the good news of Jesus Christ might be available to areas of the world that are currently spiritual deserts. Let us pray that their famines would, by the grace of God, become feasts.

Japan



POPULATION

126,344,157

MAIN RELIGION

Buddhism

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

36

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

23**Largest Unreached People Group:**

Japanese (120,880,000; 0.3% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Many people live in rugged or inaccessible areas; extreme weather conditions create harsh living environments.

Physical Needs:

Suicide rates are high; many people lack safe drinking water.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for God to open the hearts of the Japanese people to the gospel. Ask him to overcome the various factors that have made it extremely difficult for the gospel to take root in this country.
- Pray that God would open doors for gospel workers and gospel resources to be sent to areas that have been inaccessible in the past.
- Pray that those who are suicidal or in despair would see that their only hope is Christ.



DAY 25

The Least of These

And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

MATTHEW 25:40

In this passage Jesus is speaking about the day when he returns in glory with the angels to judge all people. The nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people like a "shepherd separates sheep from the goats" (v. 32). What's fascinating, and perhaps surprising to some followers of Christ, is the basis on which people will be judged.

Jesus will judge people based on how they treated his disciples who were needy, distressed, and imprisoned. To those who provided food, water, and clothing, who welcomed strangers, who cared for the sick and imprisoned, they will hear the following words: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (v. 34).

Those who show mercy and compassion to fellow Christians in their suffering will receive unending mercy and compassion from God in his eternal kingdom. On the other hand, those who ignore or refuse to serve their needy brothers and sisters will face God's "eternal fire" (v. 41). Their true spiritual standing and allegiance will have been exposed.

Notice how closely Christ identifies with his people. When you serve "the least of these my brothers," Christ says, you are actually serving him. What a powerful exhortation for us to love, care for, provide for, and even lay down our lives for one another! This begins right where we are, but, as always, it shouldn't stop there. We have brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who face severe suffering and persecution, and we should seek to do what we can to meet their needs.

The question each of us needs to ask is, "What does this mean right now for my life and for my church?" We need to pray that God would give us hearts that are willing to serve and to sacrifice for the sake of fellow believers who are in need. To serve them is to serve Jesus himself.

Bosnia & Herzegovina



POPULATION

3,222,420

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

15

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

3

Largest Unreached People Group:

Bosniak (1,650,000; 0.03% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Productivity and safety is challenged due to poor road conditions; there are very few known followers of Christ in the largest people group (Bosniak).

Physical Needs:

Many people lack safe drinking water; unemployment rates are high.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for gospel workers to be sent and churches to be planted among the Bosniak people group.
- Pray that followers of Christ would remain faithful to the gospel and that they would proclaim it to those who have never heard.
- Pray for the provision of drinking water and employment for those in need.



Loving the Unreached as Ourselves

So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

MATTHEW 7:12

Living according to this familiar verse, commonly referred to as the Golden Rule, can change our lives and the lives of those around us. What would it look like to love your spouse, your children, your parents, your co-workers, your neighbors, and even your enemies, in this way? What about your friends who are not Christians?

Or, to push this even further, what would it look like for you to love unreached people groups with this kind of selfless and compassionate love? If, for instance, you had never heard the good news of the gospel—which means you would be on a road that leads to an eternal hell—and it was illegal in your country for people to share this message, what would you want a follower of Christ to do for you?

You would at least want them to call out to God on your behalf. And surely you'd want them to make some kind of financial sacrifice in order to send missionaries to you.

Perhaps they would be willing to risk imprisonment, or even their own lives, so that you could hear about how to be saved. With eternity at stake, wouldn't you want someone to be willing to do that for you?

It's almost certain that you wouldn't want Christians and churches to sit back and do nothing, never even thinking about you, praying for you, giving of their resources for you, or being willing to take a risk on your behalf. In other words, you wouldn't want them doing what so many who have the gospel are currently doing—ignoring you.

No, you'd want them to pray, give, and go on your behalf. You'd want them to call out to God and be willing to make some kind of sacrifice for you. That's at least part of what it might look like to love the unreached as we love ourselves.

South Sudan



POPULATION

11,153,014

MAIN RELIGION

Christianity

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

78

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

7

Largest Unreached People Group:

Arab, Sudanese (383,000; 0.04% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

The safety and security of citizens is in jeopardy; freedom of expression is limited.

Physical Needs:

Maternal mortality rates are high; there is limited access to quality education.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that healthy churches would be planted and that the gospel would be proclaimed clearly in South Sudan.
- Pray that God would bring political stability for the sake of the spread of the gospel and for the safety and security of all citizens.
- Pray that God in his mercy would provide for the physical needs of all citizens in South Sudan. Ask him to send gospel workers to display the compassion of Christ in areas that are particularly needy.



DAY 27

For Your Sake He Became Poor

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

Paul encouraged the church at Corinth to give generously and sacrificially for the support of the church in Jerusalem. The church in Jerusalem was materially needy, probably due in part to a famine that had affected the city. That's why Paul was taking up an offering among many different churches to help them. To motivate this giving, Paul points to the selfless sacrifice that Christ made on behalf of his people.

Though Christ was "rich," he freely "became poor" on our behalf. Paul fleshes out what this means in Philippians 2:5-11. Though Christ was fully God, he was willing to "empty" himself by coming in the flesh and taking the form of a "servant." He was even willing to die on the cross on behalf of those who deserve God's wrath.

With this kind of example, how could the Corinthians refuse to give of their resources for the sake of brothers and

sisters in Christ? Better yet, how can we refuse to provide for the needs of fellow Christians across the world who live in poverty and struggle to find enough food and drink? We certainly can't meet every need, but we ought to do what we can.

Lest we think that Paul is simply trying to raise money by putting the Corinthians on a guilt trip, he urges them in the next chapter to give "not reluctantly or under compulsion" but rather willingly, for "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). God wants us to give out of the overflow of our hearts. It's not guilt that compels us. It's grace.

Let us, therefore, give generously so that believers might be strengthened and the gospel might be proclaimed. And let us do it all out of gratitude to God.

Pakistan

**POPULATION****219,925,225****MAIN RELIGION****Islam****TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:****512****UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:****504****Largest Unreached People Group:**

Jat (Muslim Traditions)
(32,940,000; 0% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Religious freedom is low; there are high levels of violence perpetrated by the government.

Physical Needs:

There is limited access to quality education; many people lack safe drinking water.

 **PRAYER POINTS**

- Pray that gospel workers from inside and outside Pakistan would be sent to its many unreached people groups.
- Pray that Christians and other citizens would have the freedom to evangelize and live in accordance with what they believe.
- Pray that safe drinking water and quality education would be provided for all Pakistani people.



DAY 28

A Light for the Nations

*It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*

ISAIAH 49:6

As you read through the Old Testament, it's clear that God had a special affection for Israel. They were his covenant people, the nation that he had redeemed from slavery in Egypt to be his treasured possession out of all the peoples of the earth. However, this does not mean that Israel was God's *only* concern.

God's relationship with Israel was intended to bear witness to a watching world. The nations were supposed to see God's character and redeeming power on display (Deuteronomy 4:6–8). Though Israel often failed to be a faithful witness due to sin and disobedience, God was not finished with them or with the nations. He abounds in grace and mercy.

Isaiah 49:6 says that it is “too light a thing” for God's salvation to be confined to Israel. He would send his

“servant” not only to restore Israel but also to be a “light for the nations.” We know from the rest of Isaiah, and from the New Testament, that this servant is none other than Jesus Christ (see Isaiah 42:6; 52:13–53:12; Mark 10:45). Through him sins are atoned for, and by the power of his Spirit the message of salvation is proclaimed to all nations.

Today's verse reminds us of how lavish God is with his salvation. It's not enough for his grace and love to be made known to only one people group or place. May this serve as a reminder, and even a rebuke, in light of our small and insufficient views of the scope of God's redeeming purposes. His salvation in Jesus Christ reaches “the end of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6).

Thailand



POPULATION

67,740,528

MAIN RELIGION

Buddhism

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

113

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

78

Largest Unreached People Group:

Thai (21,256,000; 0.27% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Freedom of expression is limited; individual rights and freedoms are heavily impinged.

Physical Needs:

There is a high rate of imprisonment; suicide rates are high.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that many Thai people would see the emptiness of Buddhism and repent and believe in Jesus.
- Pray that God would remove unjust leaders and overturn unjust laws in Thailand. Ask him to bring about peace for the sake of all citizens and for the good of the church.
- Pray that the church would minister to those who are in prison and to those who are suicidal. Ask God to use believers to bear witness to the hope of the gospel.



DAY 29

Meeting Urgent Need

And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

TITUS 3:14

This is the final exhortation in the book of Titus. Paul is telling Titus, a leader in the church, to help people devote themselves to “good works” in order to “help cases of urgent need.” This speaks to the effect that the gospel should have on our lives and in our churches. God’s grace not only *saves* us; it *transforms* us into the kind of people that seek to meet urgent need.

Where is there urgent need around you? In your family? In your church? In your community? Those are good places to start looking. But then broaden your perspective: where is there urgent need in the world?

Right now there are people dying and headed to an eternity separated from God, and they’ve never even heard about the gospel. That’s the most urgent need, and addressing it ought to be our top priority. However, as we seek to address people’s most urgent need, we will quickly realize that they have other needs as well.

There are people in many parts of the world who don’t have clean drinking water, which, among other problems, can lead to diseases and epidemics. There are also places where people are literally starving. There are millions of orphans without families. There are people who are enslaved and who are being abused and mistreated. These too are urgent needs.

It’s easy to get overwhelmed thinking about urgent needs around the world, and while we shouldn’t live with constant guilt for the blessings we have, there’s a sense in which we *should* be burdened and driven to devote ourselves to good works on behalf of those in need. We ought to pray that God would use us and our churches for the good of others and ultimately for his glory.

Bhutan



POPULATION

768,521

MAIN RELIGION

Buddhism

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

76

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

73

Largest Unreached People Group:

Drukpa (216,000; 0% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

Many people live in rugged or inaccessible areas; religious freedom is restricted.

Physical Needs:

Many women receive no schooling; poor nutrition leads to stunted growth in children.

 **PRAYER POINTS**

- Pray for boldness among believers in Bhutan as they face opposition and discrimination for their faith.
- Pray that believers would have easier access to Bhutan and that God would open the hearts of many people in Bhutan to repent of their sins and believe the gospel.
- Pray that God would provide the people of Bhutan with enough food and water. Ask him to use the humanitarian efforts of believers to point people to the gospel.



Every Tribe, Language, People, and Nation

*Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation ...*

REVELATION 5:9

The scene described in today's verse is why we've been praying for unreached people groups in some of the hardest to reach places in the world. It's also why we can be confident as we seek to make disciples among all of them. This is where all of history is headed.

Jesus died to ransom men and women from "every tribe and language and people and nation," and it's for this reason that he is worshipped in John's heavenly vision. So we know reaching all peoples is *God's* desire ... but is this *our* desire? Is this what we as individuals and churches are working toward? Is this why we give? Is this why we go? And does it concern us that so little of our efforts and resources are currently aimed at peoples and places where Christ is not known?

Despite the current state of the Great Imbalance (for an explanation of the Great Imbalance, see the Getting Started section at the beginning of this guide), Revelation 5:9 reminds us that God *will* accomplish his global purposes and Christ *will* receive the glory he is due.

Even as we labor and sacrifice for the spread of the gospel, we can rest assured that our efforts are not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Hopefully, these thirty days of prayer have helped highlight for you the global scope of God's redemptive purposes. Let this spur you on to continue looking for this theme in Scripture, but don't let it stop there. Ask yourself some questions:

- How will I continue to pray regularly for the spread of the gospel among the unreached?
- What resources, gifts, training, or opportunities do I have that can be used to meet urgent spiritual and physical needs for the glory of God among all nations?
- Might God be leading me to go?

Regardless of the plan God has for you and your church, take comfort in the fact that his purposes will be fulfilled: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

Libya


 A circular graphic with a red border and a white center. Inside the center is a small icon of a globe with a red 'X' over it, and the text 'STRATUS INDEX' above the number '11'.

STRATUS INDEX
11

POPULATION

6,821,482

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

TOTAL PEOPLE GROUPS:

44

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS:

31

Largest Unreached People Group:

Arab, Libyan (1,590,000; 0.04% Evangelical)

Gospel Barriers:

There are high levels of religious persecution; individual rights and freedoms are heavily impinged.

Physical Needs:

The safety and security of citizens is in jeopardy; there is insufficient water availability.

 PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for followers of Christ to count it worthy to suffer for Christ rather than deny him.
- Pray for peace and stability in the country for the sake of the spread of the gospel and for the good of all citizens.
- Pray that religious persecution would end and that the government would enact fair and just laws.





Missions Data Reimagined

The Stratus Index synthesizes reliable data from more than 30 different sources to clearly display the world's most urgent spiritual and physical needs.

More than 30 Data Sources

Including:



Stratus accounts for barriers that have impeded the progress of the gospel. This recalibrated ROI promotes a more equitable distribution of resources where needs are the highest.

Stratus aims to address the Great Imbalance by helping the church identify the world's most urgent needs so that it can reallocate its resources more strategically.

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