

## **199804 themostdifficultmissionfieldintheworld moore mark5v1 20**

When my wife and I were driving from Calgary to Banff, it was a beautiful sunny day just like this. And once we came to the mountains, the first one we came to, we turned this bend, Esther said, stop. So we stopped and she got her camera out and oh, we looked up to the beauty, the glory of these mountains.

And then we get into the car to drive to Banff and next bend, stop. And the next bend, stop. And we got out and we sang, How Great Thou Art, out in the open, praising God for the wonders of his handiwork in creation.

Well, this has been a great singing time. I heard about an old farmer in Ireland that used to have a sing song on his farm every Sunday night. He'd get all the farm hands in and they came from some farms around and they joined in his hymn sing.

And there was a new girl working on the farm. Her name was Teresa. And so after they were choosing all their favorite hymns, he noticed that Teresa didn't know anything about this and he thought he'd give her a chance to get her in.

And he said, Teresa, what hymn would you like? Oh, she says, I'll have him over there with the red hair. There are different kinds of hymns around. Well, it's so good to be here.

And this afternoon I've chosen to take something a little different. I'm going to speak about the most difficult mission field in the whole world. And I would like to read a few verses from Mark, the gospel of Mark chapter five.

We're going to read a little bit there about the, the man who was possessed of demons. Then they came to the other side of the sea and the country of the Gadarenes. And when Jesus had come out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs and no one could bind him, no, not with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains and the chains had been pulled apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces.

Neither could anyone tame him. And all was night and day. He was in the mountains and in the tombs crying and cutting himself with stones.

But when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, what have I to do with you, Jesus, son of the most high God? I implore you by God that you do not torment me. For he said to him, come out of the man unclean spirit.

Then he asked him, what is your name? And he said, my name is Legion, for we are many. And he begged him earnestly that he would not send them out of the country. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains and all the demons begged him saying, send us to the swine that we may enter them.

You see, the Lord has power over demons and all the powers of hell and Satan. And at once Jesus gave them permission and the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine. There were about 2000 and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea and committed hogicide.

They drowned in the sea. Now those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country, and they went out to see what it was that had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the one who had been demon possessed and had the Legion sitting and clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon possessed and about the swine. Then they began to plead with him to depart from their region. And when he got into the boat, he who had been demon possessed begged him that he might go with him.

However, Jesus did not permit him but said to him, go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and how he has had compassion on you. And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him, and all marveled. The most difficult mission field in the world, where would you think that might be? I heard about a little guy in one of our church Sunday schools who was asked what he would like to be when he grew up.

He said he would like to be a missionary on furlough. Another one said that he'd like to be a missionary on the beaches of Hawaii. Quite a nice choice.

There are almost six billion people in the world today, a billion people in Chinese, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist cultures who all need so desperately to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Among the one billion plus who are called Christians, whether Protestant, Orthodox, or Catholic, multiplied millions of them have not as yet placed their trust in Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord. Most nominal Christians know the fact that Christ died on a cross, but they may not understand that it is through repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus that they are saved, that they have salvation.

There are many different and difficult mission fields out there, people with different cultures and customs. I've had the privilege of visiting a number of mission fields and crusaded in a number of mission field countries. What is it that makes a mission field difficult? I think adapting to different cultures and customs of other people.

Can you imagine somebody from your town or village or city leaving home and flying down to, say, Belém in northeast Brazil and being driven to one of the areas where you can get a boat on the Amazon and go way up to a village, a Kayapo Indian village off the Amazon or the Xingu River, and suddenly finding themselves in a hut with no running water, no spare rooms, no personal bathrooms, no electric light, no fridge, no food outlets, no stores, only a smattering of words in the Indian language, no other Christians around. That's tough. I met two lovely German ladies who were in a situation just like that, and I had lunch with them one day in the

Amazon Valley Academy where I was ministering to the missionaries.

I said, do you mean to say that you were just dropped there? Yes, and all these non-Christians, no Christians at all, no Christians, Kayapo Indians, these are the big fellows who go through the jungles naked with their bodies painted, with their clubs, six-foot clubs that they beat their victims to death with, their blowpipes with poisoned arrows. They can shoot to the top of a tree and bring down a monkey for their meal, or a bird. Among these people, and you were alone, just the two of you? Oh, we were not alone.

Jesus sent us, and Jesus was with us. But my friends, that's a tough situation. Can you imagine landing in a desert area? You have to work among nomadic people, and you've got a tent, you move with them, and you have your first night in the tent, and you've got sand coming in everywhere, down your neck, your hands, and your feet.

Sand can be a terrible bore. After a little while, you sit down to your breakfast, and you find that there's sand in your cup, and sand among your bacon and egg. That's difficult, very difficult.

Then you find certain social situations and customs very difficult to handle, primitive conditions, nakedness in the jungles, witchcraft, having to eat food like monkeys, and snakes, and birds. Some countries with their political problems, where you're not welcomed by non-Christian governments, where there are closed doors, linguistical problems, religious problems, physical problems, terrible climates in some areas. And then you have financial problems with the devaluation of our Canadian dollar, and you're living in a country where inflation is there, and your dollar is worth very little.

Missionaries have such trouble, financial problems, and we need to get behind them in our solid support. But what is the most difficult mission field? Well, Jesus said, a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. In Mark 5 and 19, how be it Jesus said to him, go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and has had compassion on you.

And then the Lord said to his disciples before he left them, you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the utmost parts of the earth, and you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you. My friends, the most difficult, the most demanding, the most challenging mission field in all the world today is in that area around which we call home. Your home area, your hometown.

It's much easier to go overseas and witness for Christ among people that don't know you. It's tough when you start witnessing to your own family, your brothers and sisters who are not Christians, your parents, your relatives, your cousins, your neighbors, your workmates. Do you know people who live around your home who don't know Jesus? That's your mission field.

Do you ever wonder why you stay, you live in that house that you occupy? God planned that you would be his special missionary in your home to the people all around you. We have to be a

light that shines brightly for 10 miles around our home. Our home should be known as a place to which people can come when they want to know Jesus.

If they're looking for someone to point them the way, they should know that your home is the place. That's part of the strategy of God in putting you in that home to be his representative and his witness. I wonder how many of us have shared Jesus with somebody this past week or this past month or this year.

Has it been as long as that since you've spoken to somebody about Jesus and their need of him and how he can be their savior? My friends, there are some people when they meet as ministers and evangelists and so on, they say, well, it's okay for you. You're trained to do this. You're professionals.

My friends, I'd like to remind you that I was an engineer before the Lord called me into the ministry. I was a number of years on an engineering floor learning the business. Then I spent two years in a drawing office as a draftsman designing.

And I had the great joy as an engineer of leading a bunch of young men to Christ who worked beside me. Some of them were real hard nuts, but they came to know Jesus because I shared Christ with them in a very ordinary way. We had a happy area where we worked as engineers.

It wasn't a dull place for a moment. I tell you, it was one of the brightest spots in the whole work. And during our tea break — it's not a coffee break you get over in Britain, you know, it's a tea break.

During our tea break, we would get our mug of tea, and we would sit down together, about five or six of us, and we'd bring our little pocket testaments, and we would share together and go through our memorization verses. We'd memorize the Word of God. I remember after we memorized all the verses on salvation and assurance and other subjects, I said, fellas, we've learned all our verses.

What do you think we should memorize now? One of the boys said, how about the epistle to Romans? I said, you mean to memorize it? Sure, a verse at a time. Great! He was a new convert, teaching me that it was time I was memorizing the epistle to Romans. And we started.

And sometimes now I'm preaching the gospel, and I find myself quoting verses of Romans that I learned when I was a young engineer. My friends, you have a mission field right there, around your doorway. Don't miss it.

Dr. Frank Peters, well known among us, who was called home to be with the Lord so unexpectedly a few years ago, one of our greatest Canadian Christian educators. He made the statement a little while before the Lord took him. He said, the people in Canada are much more ready to receive the gospel than the Christians of Canada are to share it.

That's bad! Oh, my friends, we need to do something about that. If the people out there are

ready to receive the gospel, why are we not giving them the gospel, lovingly sharing the good news of Jesus with them? You see, well, it's tough to tell the people who are closest to us about the Lord. They know our lies.

They know our faults. They know our inconsistencies. They know what we've been in the past.

Difficult to talk to people like that, yes. Many people are afraid to witness to them in case they might remind them of what they used to be. But that's all right.

You can tell them that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, has cleansed you from all your sins. You've been forgiven for all the wrong things you've done. And that's why you can share the gospel with them.

Christ can do the same for them. But they might think we're oddballs if we talk to them about Jesus. They might think we're cranky.

Or maybe you've put it off for so long that they might wonder what's gone wrong that you're speaking to them now. Why have we waited so long? Friends, maybe that we're dreaming, and we're somehow imagining that they're going to be saved miraculously because they live in Canada, and because they can hear the gospel perhaps on radio or television. Oh, how the devil has blinded our eyes and lulled us to sleep.

Many churches have great missions programs for overseas, and they're concerned about the people in Africa and South America and China and the Far East and Eastern Europe. But for the people in their own neighborhood, they're not doing very much. It seems that while the Lord couldn't care more, they couldn't care less.

What can we do about it? Well, I think the first thing we have to do about it is admit our failure when we have failed. If you have not been witnessing for the Lord, tell the Lord about it. Don't make excuses for yourself.

Just ask his forgiveness and his cleansing, and ask him to fill you with his Spirit that you may have boldness to witness for him. Ask that his blessing would be on your life, and you might become fruitful. As a young teenager, I was listening to an old preacher preaching on winning souls for Christ, and I had never won anybody for Christ up to that point.

And I remember him saying, you don't have the strength or the courage to effectively witness for Jesus Christ. You need an anointing of the Holy Spirit to be his witness. When you get home, get down on your knees and say, oh God, I need a fresh anointing of your Holy Spirit to be your witness.

Empower me to speak the gospel and share the gospel with others, and accept it by faith, and you've got it. Oh, I couldn't get home fast enough, and I got down by my bedside, and I prayed, oh God, I want to do what the preacher said. I don't have the courage or the strength to be your witness, but you said that I would receive power through the Holy Spirit.

And so I'm asking you, Lord, to give me that anointing of the Holy Spirit for witnessing, and help me to lead others to Christ. I didn't see any lights flashing. I didn't hear any sirens blasting.

I just accepted that by faith. And you know, before the week was over, I had led my first soul to Christ, a young fellow, and I knew that God had answered my prayer. And I want to tell you, friends, this is some resource that's available to every one of us.

We need to learn how to witness. Do you know the Roman road? Can you start with Romans 3 and 23 and show a person who's interested that the reason why they need a Savior is because they have sinned and come short of the glory of God? And of course, Romans 6 and 23 says that the wages of sin is death. It's a serious thing to have unforgiven sin.

And then show them that Romans 5 and 8 says that Christ died for our sins, that God loved us and sent his Son to die for our sins, and that they have to get back to Romans 6 and 23. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. And get them to accept the gift by faith.

And then Romans 10 and 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised them from the dead, you will be saved. Now there you have the Roman road. Very simple, a few verses, but these are enough to lead people to Christ.

If that was all you had, you could lead a lot of people to Jesus Christ. You could start there and then depend on the Holy Spirit, depend upon him to open up avenues for you. You don't get a hold of people and buttonhole them and say, hey, here's the man, I want to tell you something, and shoot them down in flames.

No, you ask God to give you openings, to give you opportunities. Like I was in the barbers the other day there, I do go now and again, and I was getting my locks trimmed and I said, make it a bit shorter at the back and sides, please, and go easy on the top. And he said, okay.

He said, boy, isn't the world in an awful mess? Did you see the paper today? I said, yes, I did. He said, well, what's the answer? What's the answer? Friends, you talk about asking for opportunity. Now you ladies, when you're going to the hairdressers, they're going to say something like that.

Have your answer ready. When they say, what's the answer? Tell them. That's your opportunity.

Speak up. Say, Lord, give me the courage right now to speak and speak, and the Lord will help you in what you're going to say. You know, Dr. Chuck Swindoll told a story not too long ago in one of his radio broadcasts about a lady in his last church.

She and her husband were executives in their own business, he in one area and she in another, and they lived in a beautiful condo down there in California. He told how one morning, this lovely Christian couple, they had their devotions together, they had breakfast, and then he always left half an hour before her, and off he went, and as she was getting ready to go off to business, the buzzer went, and she went to the door thinking it was her husband who had

come back, forgotten something. When she opened the door, there was a young fellow standing there, a young fellow, a rapist, and he just reached forward, got a hold of her dress here, had a knife in his hand, and, be quiet, pushed her, pushed her right in, kicked the door closed.

He pushed her right through into her bedroom, threw her down on the bed and said, take your clothes off. He was going to rape her, and the young woman just happened to see by her bedside there was a little testament, and she realized that she had to do something here and do it fast. She looked up at the young man and she said, you see that book there? Yeah.

Would you let me please show you there what Jesus did for you? Okay, and she took the book. Now, that was a miracle in itself. She took the little book and turned to John 3, 16, and she said, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, and that was Jesus, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.

This wonderful little book tells you that God loves you, even though you've been doing wrong things. He loves you, and he's able to save you and change your life. Listen to what it says, and she read a few verses of scripture to him, and she said to him, would you like to ask Jesus to come into your life and change you? And she saw tears bulging out of his eyes.

She said, yes, I would. They knelt by the bed. She led him to Christ because she knew the gospel and was ready to witness, and that dear woman, after prayer and he received Christ, she says, now Jesus is in your heart, isn't he? He said, yes.

You don't want to harm me now, do you? He says, no. Have you eaten today? He said, no. Well, come and I'll make some breakfast for you.

She went and put some breakfast on, gave him a fine breakfast. She says, why have you been doing this? He said, well, I can't get a job. I don't have any friends.

I can't go out with a girl because I don't have anything to offer her. And I see fellows like your husband that have got everything, beautiful home, beautiful wives, and I just wanted some of that. She says, well, we're going to try and get you a job.

Our church is good at that. We'll help you. And she gave him the address of the church, phoned ahead to get the office ready to help him.

And off he went, never having harmed that woman at all, because she knew how to witness. My friends, you and I need to know how to witness and to depend on the Holy Spirit. He's in the world convicting of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

And when you quote a verse of scripture, the Holy Spirit drives it into the person's heart like a nail, and it won't be moved. It'll be with them forever. Remember that one day you're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of the life that you have lived.

What will you say when the Lord Jesus asks you what you did with the gospel? What you did with the opportunities that he gave you to share with the people around you? Now they're lost. It's too late. Think ahead.

That day can be so very different. We read about legion. I can see the picture in my mind's eye of the people begging Jesus to leave them.

It was costing them to have Jesus around there. They shouldn't have been feeding swine anyway if they were Jews. Unclean animals.

And so they leave. They all get into their little boat, and as the Lord is about to go aboard and sail away, can you see that poor man going over and tugging his robe and say, Lord, please, please, can I come with you? I'll do any menial job that you have to be done. I'll brush your boots.

I'll make your meals. I'll do anything, but please, can I come with you? I want to be a missionary. Jesus said, Legion, this is what I want you to do.

You go home and tell your friends the great things that the Lord has done for you and has had compassion on you. I can see them. They go off on the boat, and I can imagine that man standing there waving his hand until they've gone right out of sight.

The Bible tells us that he departed. He began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him, and they marveled. Go into chapter 7, and you'll see what happened after that.

Jesus comes back down into that area of Decapolis, and this time it's all different. The streets are lined with people. The sick, the lame, those who were troubled, they're lying there even in beds that Jesus might bless them and touch them and heal them.

Jesus came back, and there was a multitude waiting to receive him because this man had been witnessing. My brothers and sisters, listen to me. Jesus is coming back.

I wonder how many will be in your area, ready to receive him, waiting for him because of your witness. Oh, you and I can be faithful, or we can be faithless. I've got my little box here.

Let me just underline what I've been saying. I wonder, have I given my best to Jesus, who died upon the cruel tree, to think of his great sacrifice on Calvary? I know my Lord expects the best for me. How many are the lost that I have lifted? How many are the chained I've held to free? Oh, I wonder, are there any that I've won for you when you have done so much for me? How many are the lost that I have lifted? How many are the chained I've held to free? Oh, I wonder, have I done my best for Jesus when he has done so much for me? Let us pray.

Maybe in this moment, in the quietness, you would just like to lift your heart up to him and say, Lord, I want to give my life to you for witnessing. Help me to prepare by memorizing the Word, by depending on the Holy Spirit, by remembering the judgment seat of Christ that lies before.

Oh, Lord, grant to me opportunities to share my faith, that there may be those around me that will be won for Christ before my life is over.

Make me a blessing. Help me to be faithful to you until I see your face and tell the story, saved by grace, in Jesus' name. Amen, amen, and amen.

The laborers are so few. So, Lord, I give myself to help the reaping, to gather precious souls unto you. The time is right in the nation for words of power and authority.

God's seeking out a people who are willing to be counted in a glorious victory. As salt, are we ready to savor? In darkness, are we ready to be light? God's looking for a very special people who will manifest his truth and his might. Five years ago, I had a phone call from a Korean pastor.

He said, I want to come and see you. I said, why are you visiting England for other purposes? He says, no, I want to come and see you. I want to fly from Korea just to come and see you.

Can I find time? And so we arranged a date, and we arranged a time, and he came and knocked on my door, and I let him into my house. And I couldn't understand why a Korean pastor of a church of something like 45,000 people would want to come all the way from Korea to see me. He says, I've come just to say thank you.

I said, what for? What have I ever done for you? He said, I want to say thank you for the song, Here I Am, wholly available. He said, I have been sent by the committee of a conference that we have just had in the Olympic Stadium in Seoul, where 100,000 young people have gathered, and on the last night, 70,000 went forward to give their lives for the world mission, singing Here I Am, wholly available. He says, and we have begun to mobilize all 70,000 for training and for sending out.

He said, we have been sent just to say thank you. I have to say, the song was written probably about 12, 15 years ago. It was written in the middle of the night with just me and God, when I said, God, if you can do anything with somebody like me, Here I Am, wholly available.

There wasn't a thought of 70,000 Koreans giving their lives for the world mission. Why do I tell you that story? God only knows the potential and the possibilities of one person who dares to say, God, Here I Am. Here I am with the gifts that I have.

Here I am with the possessions that I have. Here I am with the resources that I have. Here I am with the people that I have around me.

Here I am with my visions. Here I am with my dreams. Here I am with the time that I have left, wholly available.

And God only knows the potential for a community, for a family, for a village or a town or a city, yes, even a nation. As someone who dares to say, Here I am, wholly available. Thank you, Dr.

John, for again bringing the challenge of God's Word to us.

Why don't we say the grace together? Shall we do that? May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen. Have a wonderful grace-filled day and have a good rest this afternoon.

God bless you.