

May 17th 2009: Available In Every Way: Acts 17:1-17

He was short in stature with bandy legs, bald as a coot **and had these enormous eyebrows.** **His name was Paul,** Apostle to the Gentiles, and he was, without doubt, the most effective Missionary that the church has ever seen.

And yet Paul saw our role in this world.....as different to His only...to the extent of the specific calling and enabling....**that God** particularly gives to us

He firmly believed.....every Christian was set apart....as a Missionary..... and he did not hesitate.....**to call us to be** like him.....in zeal & endeavour...
for the gospel and the Kingdom

This mission month... an opportune time.....for each of us revisit our passion for→ and the extent of our zeal.....**to be** missosright where God has placed us

***Last Weds Khalil shared**....Brought up as a Muslim in Afghanistan....converted when he was a refugee in India through the kindness of a man who had been a Missionary in Afghanistan. He was immediately targeted by the Muslims but he persisted in sharing the Gospel because he saw that as his mission, and his hearts desire.*

***As he spoke on Wednesday** about the need for us to emerge from this rather apathetic and materialistic Christianity **that is such a temptation for** us Western Christians, **we felt his passion** for us to be missionaries. To share the joy of Jesus through our lives. To show love to others. To care about people who are facing eternity without Jesus.*

That's what being a Missionary for Jesus is pre-eminently about

It's not about placement.....It's not about employment

It's principally about taking the opportunity.....right there in the place where God

→**to respond** to the desperate need of those around you.....as the opport arises
by living out, sharing with..... **& proclaiming** by doing acts of kindness
.the wonderful love and good news of Jesus

In acts chapter 16.....we have an example of the Apostle Paul....
doing just that.....In v16 we read this:→

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.

Paul was in God's waiting Zone

From what we see in this chapter....he had been moved on from place to place... for his own safety

Preaching the Gospel had put his life at risk.....so he had been taken to Athens and left their till the rest could arrive

He was waiting for the next chance.....to be used for Jesus

- **As I read that**.....I was left with a firm conviction...that every believer -should wake up each morning...**with** the belief that they are entering Waiting Zone

That they should be ready.....for God to give them that day.....opp to do a mission

*On April 18th 1942 Army Corporal Jacob DeShazer was taken prison by the Japanese
He remained in captivity for the next two years struggling with starvation & illness.*

After one of his fellow prisoners died of dysentery, Japanese authorities increased the rations of food and allowed the prisoners to have reading materials, including the Bible. Because there was only one Bible, De Shazer had to wait 6 months to get his turn with it. Finally, when his turn came, DeShazer read the Scriptures over and over again. Though raised in a Christian home, he had never accepted Christ. On the final day that he was allowed to have the Bible, he read Romans 10:9 once more, confessed his belief in Christ, and begged for forgiveness. He had become a Christian.

Immediately he realised this demanded changes in his life—both while in prison camp and beyond.

He entered the Waiting Zone....willing each day, to be used by Jesus

However, bad habits and attitudes don't just go away when a person accepts Christ. One day after the exercise period, DeShazer's guard hurried him towards his cell, shoved him inside, slamming the door on DeShazer's foot. Instead of opening the door, the guard kicked the prisoner's foot with his hobnailed boots.

DeShazer desperately pushed the door until he could free his foot. His mind blazed with rage.

However, Jesus' words came to him: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

Nursing his foot, DeShazer wished for a while that his mind would go blank!!! Instead, all the Scriptures God had helped him memorize flooded into his mind.

Calming down he decided, God commanded me to love. What a wonderful world it would be if we all tried to love one another. I'll try !

The next morning was the test. (Deliberately puts himself in the waiting zone)

DeShazer greeted the guard respectfully in Japaneze. The guard gave him a puzzled look and said nothing.

Every morning the prisoner offered friendly greetings and received no response. Then one morning the guard walked straight to DeShazer's cell and spoke to him through the door. He was smiling. DeShazer asked him about his family. From that time on the guard treated him with respect and kindness, once even brought him a boiled sweet potato. Another time he slipped him figs and candy.

DeShazer had no idea what happened.....They went their separate ways:
But the main point is....that he put himself into God's Waiting Zone
And was obedient to what God called him to do

What about you.....What about me.....??

- **When we turn back to the story of Paul**

We find that he was not just in the Waiting Zone.....
He was conscious of being there for God.....**and** therefore aware....God's voice

V16 says: Amplified version

**his spirit was grieved and roused to anger as
he saw that the city was full of idols.**

Athens was a very proud city

A city full of philosophers.....that welcomed new ideas...new ways of thinking
A city full of temples and gods.....**constantly** ready to elevate the latest idol
The latest god.....to a position of prominence

As Paul waited in that place.....He was distressed by what he saw around him
He was concerned for people.....who were ignorant of the God who created
and of His Son who died.....and rose again.....**would return**

**And it was that distress in his spirit.....that led him into the Synagogues
And then into the market place**

**Paul was not just in God's Waiting Zone.....He was there in tune with God
His spirit saw things.....as God's Spirit saw things.....**And He** was distressed
Distressed enough to act.....**

To act according to the gifts ...abilitiesthat God had given him
To do that which God had prepared him to do

- **You see God** will not expect us all to minister His Gospel.....in the same way
But I believe that He does expect us all.....**to be distressed by the needs**
by the evil.....unbelief....injustice.....
and to respond...in the name and power of Jesus

(Uganda.....Geoff and the fence: The lady who stood up and said→We cant leave it there)

What distresses you? Is it the lack of Christian influence on the young?
Then pray about it.....And it may be that the Lord.....speak to Jenny....mentor

Is it the growing need for help...to just survive financially

- **It's a good beginning**.....to commit yourself to waking.....
and deliberately putting
Into God's waiting Zone for that day

But you and I need to do more than that
We also need to be open to what distresses us as believers.....**to pray....**
..and then as the Spirit guides.....opens doors.....enables.....
to act

Because that's what being a Missionary....is all about

