

Go Into All the World

December 3, 2023

1. Intro

- a. In the year 1872, a young woman from the town of Scottsville, Virginia, left her home and her parents to become the first single woman missionary in the Baptist denomination
 - i. This young woman was named Edmonia Moon
 1. Edmonia would end up going to the country of China, where she was stationed as a teacher at the North China Mission Station in Shandong province
 2. Unfortunately, due to health issues, Edmonia had to return back to the states after serving just a short time in China
- b. However, while Edmonia was still in China, her older sister, Charlotte, joined her there as well
 - i. At the age of 32, Charlotte was appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention to go to China, following in her sister's footsteps as a single woman missionary
 - ii. Charlotte, who was better known by her nickname, Lottie, was also given a position in the school in Shandong
 1. But she very quickly realized that teaching was not her passion
 - a. Lottie was an extremely intelligent woman
 - i. Ten years before, she had received one of the first Master of Arts degrees awarded to a woman by a southern university
 - ii. She had become fluent in Latin, Greek, French, and Italian
 - b. So she was certainly well-qualified to be a teacher anywhere in the world
 - i. But Lottie's real passion was NOT teaching, but evangelism
 - ii. As she looked around her in Shandong, she realized that the male missionaries were seeing great fruit amongst the Chinese men, but the women were getting left behind
 1. And, instead of reaching out to the Chinese women with the good news of the Gospel, the missionary wives were only allowed to teach young children
 - iii. Lottie, being a very gifted writer, began using those writing skills to pen letter after letter to the leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention, asking them to change their policies on the roles of women on the mission field
 1. In one of her more passionate letters, Lottie wrote these words:
 - a. "Can we wonder at the mortal weariness and disgust, the sense of wasted powers and the conviction that her life is a failure, that comes over a woman when, instead of the ever broadening activities that she had planned, she finds herself tied down to the petty work of teaching a few girls?"
 - i. Lottie longed to take the Gospel out into the villages, but the bureaucratic red tape of the SBC kept her from being able to do so
 - iv. Finally, in 1885, at the age of 45, Lottie took matters into her own hands
 1. She left her teaching job in Shandong, and moved further inland to the villages to begin reaching the women and children there
 - a. At first, Lottie was either mocked or ignored by most of the people in the villages
 - i. She still wore her American clothing, and wore her hair in the American fashion
 - ii. The people of China associated her with Western foreigners who were beginning to flow into their land as a result of the Opium trade, and they often dismissed her and called her names such as "Devil Woman"
 - b. So, in a gesture of humility, Lottie began dressing like the Chinese women
 - i. She became fluent in the Chinese language
 - ii. And she also began the simple act of baking cookies to take to the people's homes

1. It wasn't long before Lottie became known around the villages, not as "Devil Woman," but as "Cookie Lady"
 - v. And this sweet, humble Cookie Lady would begin to win over hundreds of Chinese women and children to the Lord
 1. Lottie's ministry in China would continue to be effective for many more years, but one of her most impactful ministries would be the letters she would write to the Southern Baptists back home in America
 - a. In these letters, Lottie pleaded for the churches to begin to give more money to the cause of Global Missions
 - i. In one of the letters, she suggested that all SBC churches set aside the week before Christmas as a strategic time to give toward this cause
 - ii. In this letter, she wrote, "Need it be said why the week before Christmas is chosen? Is not the festive season, when families and friends exchange gifts in memory of The Gift laid on the altar of the world for the redemption of the human race, the most appropriate time to consecrate a portion from abounding riches and scant poverty to send forth the good tidings of great joy into all the earth?"
 1. Why not, in this season of giving and generosity, focus our giving on sending the Gospel into all the world?
 2. As a result of these letters, the Woman's Missionary Union was formed, and in 1888, the first "Christmas offering for missions" was collected
 - a. It raised \$3,315, enough to send three new missionaries to China
 - vi. Lottie Moon lived a life of selfless devotion to the spreading of the Gospel to the people of China
 1. She would end up giving her life for this one great cause, as, in 1912, at the age of 72, she would die from starvation, having given most of her food and money to those in need around her
 - a. In 1918, the "Christmas offering for missions" was renamed as the "Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," which Southern Baptists are still participating in, 105 years later
2. So what do we learn from the example of Lottie Moon's life?
 - a. First, the Gospel spreads through the OBEDIENT
 - i. This is one of the great mysteries of our faith, isn't it?
 1. We just learned last week about the heavens declaring the wonders of God
 2. Jesus said to the religious leaders in Luke 19 that the very stones on the ground could cry out his praises
 3. And in Revelation 14, we see with John a vision of an angel flying through the skies proclaiming the eternal Gospel
 - a. The skies, the rocks, the angels – they all have the ability to sing God's praises
 - ii. And yet, with all of these means at His disposal, who does God choose to spread the most glorious message in all of creation?
 1. You! Me!
 - a. Broken, incompetent, easily distracted, easily intimidated human beings
 - b. We have been entrusted with the ONLY message that can bring the dead to life
 - i. We have been entrusted with the ONLY message that has the power to save
 2. And it ALL hinges upon OUR obedience
 - a. One of the things that I didn't share about Lottie Moon was the fact that she grew up on a 1500-acre tobacco plantation owned by her family
 - i. In other words, she came from a family of SUBSTANTIAL wealth and privilege
 - ii. She was given a high-quality education
 - iii. She was a gifted and talented writer and communicator
 1. Who's to say that Lottie Moon couldn't have used all that wealth and privilege and talent to become a prominent author in her day?
 - b. But instead, Lottie walked away from it all

- i. As a single, 32-year-old woman, Lottie obediently left everything to follow Christ
 - 1. And the hundreds in China who came to know the Lord are a testimony to her obedience
 - ii. Think about the contrasting story we see in the Scriptures, as Jesus encounters the rich young man in Matthew 19
 - 1. The rich young man had followed all the right commands
 - 2. He had made all the right decisions
 - 3. He believed he had checked all the right boxes to inherit eternal life
 - a. But when Jesus confronts him and tells him to sell all his possessions, give the money to the poor, and come follow after him, what was the young man's response?
 - i. He walked away from Jesus, full of sorrow
 - ii. He walked away from Jesus, unwilling to obey
 - iii. What a sad contrast to Lottie Moon's obedience
- iii. But it wasn't just Lottie Moon's obedience to God's call on her life – it was also her obedience in the face of opposition from man
 - 1. I love the Southern Baptist Convention, and all that it serves to accomplish through the cooperation of churches across our nation
 - a. But in the end, it is a flawed organization, just like every other organization on the planet
 - i. And one of their greatest flaws in those early years was their failure to allow women to fully utilize the gifts that God had given to them
 - ii. When Lottie Moon went to China, she could have very easily followed the status quo for women missionaries of that day
 - 1. She could have stayed at the school in Shandong, and she probably would have seen some good, Gospel-driven fruit from her service there
 - 2. But she knew that that was NOT what God had called her to do
 - iii. So, when the men in charge of the Foreign Mission Board stalled and stumbled in allowing her to go and take the Gospel into the villages, Lottie realized that she must obey God rather than man, and she went out on her own
 - 1. And the fruit that came out of her obedience to God is the evidence that what she did was RIGHT
- iv. My friends, the reality is that there will ALWAYS be naysayers INSIDE THE CHURCH when people decide to take radical steps of obedience
 - 1. I remember when I accepted the call to go into the ministry and to go to seminary, in my early forties with a family of seven
 - a. I remember talking to a brother in Christ who said to me, "Don't you have a Bible that you can read on your own? You don't need to go through all that extra work..."
 - 2. How many missionaries, I wonder, when feeling the call to leave everything and go to some foreign land, have been faced with the question, "Why do you need to go THERE? Aren't there lost people right here in our own city?"
 - a. When we decide to go all-in with Jesus, there will always be people who question what we are doing
 - i. It is at those times that we must follow Lottie's example, and say with Peter, "We must obey God rather than men."
- v. The Gospel spreads through the OBEDIENT
- b. We also learn from Lottie Moon's example that the Gospel spreads through the HUMBLE
 - i. Think again of Lottie's upbringing and education
 - 1. She could have VERY easily gone into the villages of China with an attitude of arrogance and superiority over these uncultured farmers

- a. But that's not what she did, was it?
 - i. No, instead, she adopted the look of the people around her
 - ii. She took the time to learn their language
 - iii. She took the time to bake cookies for the same people who called her "Devil Woman"
- b. Through her humility, God opened the door for the seeds of the Gospel to take root
- ii. Again though, this is simply what the Scriptures teach, isn't it?
 - 1. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, as Paul is talking about how he surrendered his rights as an Apostle, he says to the believers,
 - a. *¹⁹For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.*
 - i. Lottie Moon lived this out, didn't she?
 - ii. It is the same for us still today
 - 1. As followers of Jesus, we are most certainly called to be holy and set apart
 - a. We are called to look and talk and live differently than the world around us
 - b. We are called to stay clean and pure from the sin that the world is so heavily entangled in
 - c. But we are NOT called to be monks, are we?
 - i. Jesus doesn't call us to live in our own, isolated little bubbles
 - ii. He calls us to be IN the world
 - b. This is what it means to be salt and light
 - i. Salt doesn't change the flavor of anything if it is left in the shaker
 - ii. A flashlight doesn't change improve on the light of the sun on a bright and sunny day
 - 1. No, the only way that salt makes a difference is if it is placed INTO an unseasoned meal
 - 2. The only way that light makes a difference is if it is placed INTO a room full of darkness
 - 3. The only way that a Christian makes a difference is if they are placed INTO the world
 - c. And what Paul shows us, and Lottie Moon shows us, and countless other Christians across the history of the church show us, is this:
 - i. The Gospel spreads through the humble
 - 1. The Gospel spreads through those who are willing to become all things to all people, that by all means we might save some
- iii. If you think about it, this is exactly what Jesus did for us, wasn't it?
 - 1. In Philippians 2:3-11, Paul wrote,
 - a. *³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- iv. The Gospel spreads through the humble, for the Gospel is centered around the humility of our Savior
- c. And third, we learn from Lottie Moon's example that the Gospel spreads through THE CHURCH
 - 1. The reality that the Scriptures present before us is that God DOES NOT call everyone to "Go into all the world," does He?
 - a. Think back to our Wednesday night study in the book of Philippians
 - i. Paul was extremely thankful for the physical presence of Epaphroditus
 - ii. But he acknowledged that it was the Philippian CHURCH who had sent Epaphroditus and the financial support along with him
 - iii. He didn't reprimand the Philippian church because they ALL didn't come to him in Rome
 - iv. Instead, he was exceedingly thankful for who and what they had sent
 - 2. God doesn't call us ALL to go, but He does call us all to be obedient
 - b. I love how John Piper words it...
 - i. There are only three responses to God's call for the church to take the Gospel to the nations:
 - 1. You can GO
 - 2. You can SEND
 - 3. Or you can DISOBEY
 - ii. The Gospel doesn't just spread through human beings like you and me
 - 1. The Gospel spreads through OBEDIENT men, women, and children, as we TOGETHER pool our resources, our time, and even our lives to the building of the Kingdom
 - a. Lottie Moon realized these truths, as she was not just content to go herself
 - i. Instead, she spent much time and effort mobilizing the churches back in the US to join her in her call
 - b. Like the Apostle Paul in Romans 10: 14-15, Lottie asked these all-important questions:
 - i. *"How will anyone call on the name of the Lord if 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? How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*
 - iii. My friends, we learn from Lottie's example that the Gospel spreads through the obedient
 - 1. Not just the obedient missionaries who go, but also through the obedient churches who send
 - 2. This is why we emphasize the Lottie Moon offering every year
 - a. Yes, we celebrate all those who answer God's call to go into all the world
 - b. But we also acknowledge that it takes the entire body of Christ to send out those who are called
 - iv. The Gospel spreads through the OBEDIENT
 - v. The Gospel spreads through the HUMBLE
 - vi. And the Gospel spreads through THE CHURCH
 - 1. Which brings us to where we are today...
- 3. The LMCO today
 - a. Each year, the International Mission Board of the SBC sets a goal for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
 - i. This year, the goal is a staggering \$200 million!
 - 1. I don't know about you, but when I hear numbers that high floating around big organizations – even GOOD organizations – my initial reaction is one of skepticism
 - a. How much of that \$200 million is going toward unnecessary overhead expenses?

- b. How much of that \$200 million is going toward lining the pockets of staff and administrators?
 - c. How much of that \$200 million is actually going to the mission field??
 - i. These are GOOD questions to ask!
 - ii. And the great news is that EVERY penny of the Lottie Moon offering goes directly to the mission field
 - 1. And the Southern Baptists, as the diligent record-keepers that they are, have the statistics to back this up
 - a. Just listen to these numbers from 2022 – as a result of the 2022 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering,
 - i. 3,521 missionaries and their families were FULLY supported out on the mission field
 - 1. These missionaries did not have to spend valuable time and money driving all across the US trying to raise support from individual churches or families
 - a. They were FULLY supported through the generosity of Southern Baptist churches, so they could FULLY focus on the spread of the Gospel
 - ii. In addition to that, 21,231 new churches were planted across the world
 - 1. Those are 21,231 new outposts from which the Kingdom of God can expand into places of great darkness
 - iii. A number that I hope resonates with us here at Forest Hills is, 67 new people groups and places were engaged with the Gospel
 - 1. These are the unreached people groups that we pray for each week!
 - 2. Through the Lottie Moon offering, 67 of these unreached people groups are now on their way to becoming reached!
 - iv. 178,177 salvations were recorded
 - v. And 102,417 baptisms happened
 - vi. Additionally, 146,026 people across the world received leadership training
 - 1. This is a REALLY important number
 - 2. We’re not just making a bunch of converts that we can add to our statistics at the end of the year - we are training up pastors and teachers to be able to continue to disciple these new believers in their communities, so these new believers will endure to the end
 - iii. As these numbers show, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is making a tremendous impact for the Kingdom, all over the world, as new missionaries are sent out, the Gospel is sent to the unreached, and churches are planted for the training and equipping of these new believers
 - 1. All of this because one woman courageously left everything to follow the call of Christ on her life, and took the Gospel to the ends of the earth!

4. The LMCO for us

- a. So the question is, how will we here at Forest Hills choose to participate in this great effort this year?
 - i. First, just to be clear, the Lottie Moon offering is intended to be a special offering, over and above your current giving
 - 1. It’s not a gift in place of what you normally give – it’s a gift in addition to your normal giving
 - a. So there is a sacrifice involved
 - i. But isn’t sacrifice a key element of our faith as followers of Jesus Christ?
 - 2. So this is a gift over and above your normal giving
 - a. As a church, we have set our goal for this year at \$500
 - i. In the past, the church has looked at the average monthly giving, and they’ve said they will shoot for 10% of that number
 - ii. Over the past few months, our giving has been around \$4500 each month
 - 1. We figured we would just round up then, and shoot for an even \$500
 - iii. That \$500 is really just an arbitrary number though

1. If we hit our goal, that will be fantastic!
2. If we don't, it doesn't mean we lose out on God's blessing for our church
3. But just think again about the numbers from last years' offering
 - a. Think about the GLOBAL impact this gift has made, and will continue to make
 - i. Over 3500 missionaries supported
 - ii. Over 21000 new churches planted
 - iii. Over 178000 new believers
 1. All because Southern Baptist Churches just like ours chose to give sacrificially to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
 2. I would wholeheartedly say that this is a worthy investment of your finances this Christmas season!!
- b. So the next question is, how do we give?
 - i. Next Sunday, December 10, is the official day for giving to the Lottie Moon offering
 1. We'll have special envelopes designated specifically for this purpose
 2. We'll also have a link available for you to give online, and your gift will be given under the name of Forest Hills Baptist Church
 - ii. So here's the challenge...
 1. Pray about it
 2. As the SBC leads up to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, they also have their yearly Week of Prayer for International Missions
 - a. You can find the link to the prayer guide for that in your worship guide
 3. Spend this week praying for the advancement of the Gospel around the world
 - a. And at the same time, pray about what God would have you give specifically toward this cause
 - i. Talk about it as a family
 - ii. Make this a JOYFUL part of your Christmas season
 1. And then plan on bringing your offering next week, either to give in person, or online
- c. It is truly mindblowing to think about the fact that God has entrusted such a monumental task to people like us, isn't it?
 - i. If I was God, that's certainly not the route I would have chosen
 - ii. Thankfully for all of us, I am not God
 1. He is far wiser than we can ever begin to comprehend
 - a. And in His infinite wisdom, this is the way that He has chosen to accomplish His great plan of redemption in the world
 - i. His Son, Jesus Christ was obedient to the call, even unto death
 - ii. Christ was the epitome of humility, as he emptied himself of all the glories of heaven, and became a servant on our behalf
 - iii. And now this Jesus reigns at the right hand of the Father, as the head of HIS church, whom he has commanded to go into all the world, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe everything he has commanded
 2. And in his wonderful grace, he leaves us with this incredible promise, "I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - a. Forest Hills Baptist Church, will we choose to GO?
 - b. Will we choose to SEND?
 - c. Or will we choose to DISOBEY?
- d. I pray that we are encouraged and challenged to answer the call this morning, as we look at the lives of just one of many of Christ's faithful servants, Lottie Moon.