

PP Expect Great Things. Attempt Great Things

Part 1-William Carey, *The Father of Modern Missions*

6/6-7/2026

PP *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2*

The lives of godly, faithful men and women are cheering us on as it is our turn to run *‘the race’*

PP *Will your life spur future Christians to run their race when it is their turn?*

Except for the scriptures themselves, nothing has motivated me more to trust God and run this race than reading of the lives of faithful men and women of God

This summer, we will look 9 saints of the last 300 years and we begin by looking at the life of

PP (Pic) William Carey, born in England in 1761 and died 73 years later as a missionary in India in 1834

His life proved what God can do with an ordinary person who will live by faith in Him

PP 1-William Carey’s faith was built on God’s Word

William Carey’s life was shaped by **Isaiah 54:2-3**

PP *“Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.” Isaiah 54:2-3*

He understood that the good news of Jesus will reach all nations and the guarantee was the resurrection of Christ

In the Isaiah passage, the prophet had just predicted of the Christ: **PP** *“He bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:12*

Jesus Christ lives, having conquered death, and that meant that His purposes to save those on the right and left, people from all nations could never be thwarted

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the signal of His ultimate triumph

But in Carey’s day, the church in England did not have a world-wide focus to the gospel

He had joined the Particular Baptists, whose confidence in God’s sovereignty lulled them to believe God would save Who He wanted so there was no need to go the *desolate cities*

One Sunday, Carey preached on **Isaiah 54**, exhorting Christians to take the gospel to the unsaved around the world, when an older pastor shouted with a loud voice, **PP** *“Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He’ll do it without your aid or mine.”*

In that moment, doubt surged in Carey’s heart, but he quickly realized that faith does not wait on clarity, or approval, or permission, but on trusting obedience, for he believed, **PP** *A faith that waited for perfect certainty would never accomplish great things for God*

No matter how small or complicated the task God gives us, we have the power of the Spirit, the authority of the risen Lord and absolute confidence in our success

Conviction burned in his heart, faith blossomed in the command of Jesus: **PP** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” Matthew 28:19*

He drew strength from the promise of Jesus in that passage: **PP** *“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20*

Carey was convinced this command and promise was for all Christians of all ages, and in his

most famous sermon of 1792 called *The Deathless Sermon*, he powerfully called the church to trust God and go, making a bold statement that would soon define his life:

PP *Expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God*

PP 2-William Carey's faith was strengthened through struggle and suffering

William's father was a poor parish clerk and schoolmaster in Paulerspury, England

The oldest of 5 children, young William was frequently sick so his father decided he should work indoors as a shoemaker, a more skilled position than a cobbler, one who repaired shoes
He apprenticed his son to Master Nichols, and while William began to learn the trade, his love was for books, and languages

He read obsessively, absorbing Latin, Greek and Hebrew, learning early that languages were the keys to unlocking understanding

At 18 years old, he visited a Particular Baptist church, expecting to be bored and fall asleep like he normally did in the Anglican church he grew up in, but when Thomas Chater stood to preach, sleep was the last thing on his mind...in fact, he surrendered his life to Christ

He immediately began to share the gospel with Master Nichols, who at first rejected it, but eventually was saved as well, and almost immediately died unexpectedly

A new master took over the shop, a Christians by the name of Thomas Old, and this man had a sister in law named Dorothy whom Carey soon married

But it would be a marriage filled with struggle, with highs and lows throughout its time

Three of their 7 children died in childhood, and one son who had become a missionary himself, failed terribly and later died from alcohol and drugs

Another son conspired with William's nephew Eustace to try and wrest control of the mission from him, eventually forcing Carey and his partners to break ties with their own mission

But greater still was his struggle with Dorothy, who never wanted to go to India and at first refused though she was later talked into it by Carey's partner, Dr. Thomas

She struggled fiercely with mental illness, alternating between falling into his arms and other times blaming William for the deaths of their young children, accusing him of having an affair while in India, brandishing a knife to kill him

He said, **PP** *'This is indeed the valley of the shadow of death to me. But I rejoice that I am here notwithstanding; and God is here.'* Carey after his first wife's death

Always struggling with too little funds, and with scarce resources in India to help Dorothy,

William and the rest of the missionaries came around her together with a hired servant to care for her each day

He pleaded with God to help her, as he had pleaded that God would save his children, but God's answer each time was, 'No'

His wife grew worse and finally, on December 8, 1807, Dorothy died, plunging Carey into grief

But he persevered in his trust of God, once saying to his nephew, **PP** *'If [anyone] give me credit for being a plodder he will describe me justly. Anything beyond this will be too much. I can plod. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything.'* Carey

He would soon need that plodding faith, because 5 years later would come yet another tragedy
Carey had landed in India November 11, 1793, and almost immediately began to translate the New Testament in the Bengali language

8 years later, he completed the NT translation and part of the OT, and it was published

By this time, he had moved to Serampore, India, was joined by other missionary partners along

with their wives, and by 1809, they published and printed the entire bible in Bengali 5 years after his wife died, on March 12, 1812, a fire destroyed their printing press and all the translation manuscripts

Years of work, destroyed in a few hours, and after the shock subsided, Carey said to his fellow missionaries: **PP** *"We need to pray. This is not a random act, but all part of the providence of God. He has promised that all things work for good to them who love God. Let's ask Him to give us peace and direction."*

The next day, this plodding, trusting, persevering man, told his team, *'We will replace everything that was destroyed and use it for God's glory'*, and in 4 months, they did Again translating and printing the books that had burned, making 212,000 copies of the bible in 40 languages, reaching 300 million people in Carey's lifetime

Carey's faith did not avoid cost, it endured cost and he never demanded of God an easy life Through personal loss, constant hardship, lack of money, God's Word endured his faith

He wrote to his sisters, **PP** *'I am very fruitless and almost useless, but the Word and the attributes of God are my hope, my confidence, and my joy, and I trust that his glorious designs will undoubtedly be answered.'* Carey

PP 3-William Carey's faith changed the world

He spent 41 years in India with no break, leading 700 people to Christ, but it was the foundation he laid that changed the world

Men like Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, David Livingstone all had their passion for missions lit by the spark of William Cary's life

He is called the **PP** *'Father of modern missions'*, and it's said his life marked the turning point of Indian culture from a downward to an upward trend

He helped abolish the terrible practice of suttee, where a wife set herself on fire on her deceased husband's funeral pyre as the ultimate, terrible act of love and devotion

Carey was influential in ridding India of usury by giving the poor access to banks for fair loans

He set up schools giving girls access to education, he helped abolish the practice of exposing unwanted babies by abandoning them in forests or throwing them in a river to drown

These and many more reforms were brought to India through William Carey,

14 mission societies were started because of him, a college in Serampore India started by him,

All the while, humble William would insist, **PP** *'I know success depends entirely upon the blessing of God, and there in Him I will trust and not be afraid.'* Carey

As he drew near to death, he insisted his gravestone would be simply marked: **PP** (Pic of gravestone) *"A guilty, weak and helpless worm; on thy kind arms I fall; Be thou my strength and righteousness, my Jesus and my all."* Hymn by Isaac Watts

He proved in his life that **PP** *'it is worthwhile to lay ourselves out with all our might in promoting the cause and kingdom of Christ.'* Carey

Christian brother and sister, what is God asking you to do for Him?

Start a bible study at work, in your neighborhood, serve Him full time, go to the mission field, start a ministry, witness to your family, give your money to a ministry?

The greatest obstacle is often not the size of the task, but our desire to know the outcome before we obey...*We want to see where the path leads before we take the first step*

But faith has never been built on having all the answers, it is trusting the character of God even when we cannot see the end of the road

Whatever God is telling you to do, *Expect Great Things and Attempt Great Things!*

Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper was of great importance on Carey's ministry for two major reasons:

First, India has over 100 languages, almost 20,000 dialects, but the language of the Lord's

Supper-the death of Jesus and His return-brought everyone together in *unity*

Second, India was a vast country caught in the grip of Hinduism, which taught a caste system

During Carey's time, the top caste were the teachers and priests, the next down were the warriors and nobles, then came the farmers and traders, followed by the farm workers and slaves and finally, the untouchables who were not allowed to associate with any of the others

But Carey insisted that all baptized believers were welcome at the Lord's Supper, no matter what caste they were part of, that all Christians were equal before God

He famously demonstrated this revolutionary truth by having a high-caste Hindu convert and a lower-caste convert serve the elements to one another, dismantling the *inequality*

If you are a believer, see again in the symbols of the bread and juice, the broken body and bloody death of Jesus, given for us for our salvation

Hold it in your mind that this is a promise that He will return for us

And learn from William Carey that this supper encourages our absolute unity with the truth of our equality with each other, sons and daughters together in the family of God our Father

Let's eat and drink together