





DAY 18

## The Christmas Model for Missions

Christmas is a model for missions. Missions is a mirror of Christmas. As I, so you.

For example, danger. Christ came to his own, and his own received him not. So you also. They plotted against him. So you. He had no permanent home. So you. They trumped up false charges against him. So you. They whipped and mocked him. So you. He died after three years of ministry. So you.

But there is a worse danger than any of these, which Jesus *escaped*. So you!

In the mid-sixteenth century the missionary Francis Xavier (1506–1552) wrote to Father Perez of Malacca (today part of Malaysia) about the perils of his mission to China. He said, “The danger of all dangers would be to lose trust and confidence in the mercy of God. . . . To

distrust him would be a far more terrible thing than any physical evil which all the enemies of God put together could inflict on us, for without God's permission neither the devils nor their human ministers could hinder us in the slightest degree.”<sup>5</sup>

The greatest danger a missionary faces is not death but to distrust the mercy of God. If that danger is avoided, then all other dangers lose their sting.

In the end God makes every dagger a scepter in our hand. As J. W. Alexander says, “Each instant of present labor is to be graciously repaid with a million ages of glory.”<sup>6</sup>

Christ escaped this danger—the danger of distrusting God. Therefore God has highly exalted him! As he, so you.

Remember this Advent that Christmas is a model for missions. *As I, so you.* And that mission means danger. And the greatest danger is distrusting God's mercy. Succumb to this and all is lost. Conquer here and nothing can harm you for a million ages.

5 From “A Letter to Father Perez,” in *Classics of Christian Missions*, ed. Francis M. DuBose (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1979), 221f.

6 J. W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Preaching: Classic Contributions to Homiletics* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975), 108.