

# Missions in Davao, Philippines - Steve St Clair

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Preacher: Steve St. Clair

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. I was observing a pattern when Paul, who's a missionary evangelist, church planter, as he travels, he writes back to the various churches he's been part of.

And in each letter, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, he writes and says, I pray for you. And I'm thankful for your fellowship. Fellowship is a New Testament term for hanging out with your friends.

But it's, and he said, I'm glad we did this. I'm glad we're together. And I'm thankful for this. And this is how I'm doing. And this friend of ours we had in common. And then he always finishes up in that paragraph of prayer with a word of encouragement or challenge.

[1:15] Looking here in Colossians, in chapter 1, verse 3, he says, We give thanks, always thanks to God the Father for you.

And we pray for you. And in verse 10 he says, We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.

And what I'd really like to point out is he kind of pushes them at three levels. He says, I want you to have the knowledge. Do you know the Bible stories?

In the fellowships like we meet with, you guys know so many Bible stories. You know them all. It's scary. And then it says, but be smart about it.

Not only know the story, but be wise and understand it. And so what he does, each time he gets together with the Christians and writes to them, he says, It's great that we love the Lord together.

[2:22] It's great that we're people who want to honor him. Keep moving along. I use this expression a lot because it touches my life.

In middle school, when kids say, I know, I know, it means they don't have a clue what's going on. That's what you say in middle school when you don't know what's going on.

Oh, I know, I know. It's a little bit easy for us as believers to be like that. I know that. I know that story. John 3, 16, Ephesians 2, 8, 9, Romans 10, 9, and 10.

I know all that stuff. And he's saying here, and he says this in each chapter. So make sure that you not only know it, but you think about it and build on it.

So he wants us not just to know the story, but to keep growing in it. That's an important commitment all through the epistles. And I share that with you because that would be my encouragement to you.

[3:28] You guys bless us so much. We're so thankful for all that you've done and for what you're doing and how you're trying to live for God. And we're trying to do the same thing somewhere else in the world.

And so that's the fellowship part. The push part is you can be a little better. You can be a little deeper. You can be a little tougher.

Stay with it. God will bless you. Don't only understand it, but think about it. Be wise. God will honor that. Let's pray.

Father, we pray that we would be people who continue to grow, to continue to deepen in our walk with you, continue to be more and more useful for you and honoring to you.

We need your help. We ask your blessing in Jesus' name. I want to just share a little bit about missions in the Philippines real quick. One thing that's really a blessing in my life is Daniel Manameli.

[4:30] And Daniel is working alongside of us in the Philippines and working in our place while we're gone. He is an amazing kid.

Sometimes he's amazing because he forgets things. His mom and dad speak to them about that. Little ADD there. Incredible. The guy is a great linguist.

He already speaks Sibuan better than Dottie and I do. That's an amazing thing. He speaks Bajau, the Samau, for the Bajau people, so well that the government has asked him to be on government committees for working on language books.

What a great commendation. This is a secular commendation. And he lives it out. He lives with Samau people much of the time. And he's doing it right.

But we were discussing at breakfast this morning something that happens in missions. I'm an esteemed missionary. Boy, that sounds sick, doesn't it?

[5:37] The reason is I'm bigger than everybody in the Philippines. And I have white hair. I am mature. Not really, just old. But they give you credit for being mature and old.

And so anything I say, people will say yes to. I think they're afraid of me, actually. Anyway. But it doesn't mean that they'll do it.

They just say yes. That's how people work in the Philippines. So I have to say less and less. Daniel is Philippine size.

And he speaks the language excellently. And he has a servant's heart and a kind spirit. And he's a useful man for God in a very special way.

Anyway, he's a reflection of this fellowship. Something I think is really cool. Because in his, I forget what the Amish call it, but in his period of being in outer space after college, as he's come back to the Lord, time and again, he'll do something at Bible Fellowship.

[6:46] And he'll say, oh, I learned that from Kevin in Young Peoples. Ah, that's the way we do it at Bethel. Da-da-da-da. And you can sense all of the things that this fellowship has put into the guy's life that are useful today for God.

I'm really blessed by that. And you need to keep that in your heart. It's a treasure to have somebody who's come through your fellowship and has now gone out and is useful, is doing it right, mostly.

One of the things I'm hoping he did right is make this video that we're going to look at. Because he does that kind of thing for Dottie and I. We are computer illiterate. And he does the magic push the keys and make things come out the other end.

And so there are a couple of things to look for real quick. What we do in the Philippines is work. I teach at Faith Academy, a missionary kids school.

And we work in Bible Fellowship. And Bible Fellowship has three spin-off groups. One is Kavantian, and a man who has gone out and started a neighborhood fellowship there.

[8:05] Another is Gilbert's in Huhangin. And then north of the city is a fellowship called Valuk, spelled B-A-L and pronounced V-A-L, Valuk.

And this is sort of the shining light in our lives right now. And particularly, two things happened this last year.

There are two or three that reflect on the ministry. One is we had vacation Bible school, and we were concerned that over the years we had hundreds of kids come to vacation Bible school and saw none of them at church.

So we changed our approach this year. And for four weekends, we had vacation Bible school Saturday and Sunday. Saturday, Sunday, Saturday, Sunday.

The purpose of that was kids come consistently because we give out a lot of school supplies. And they're going to earn points all the way. But what we wanted was them to have the DVBS experience, jump around, sing weird songs, get prizes, that kind of DVBS stuff.

[9:21] And we wanted them to see the church function on Sunday and have them be there and see their DVBS teacher also be their Sunday school teacher. And so we did that for four weeks, and we think that was a good idea.

We have probably 15 or 16 kids now that were in DVBS that are now with us in the church. So DVBS was a good thing. Then we had a camp, and the way we worked camp was it was free to come to camp, but you could only come if you brought somebody who wasn't in church.

And sure enough, we had 110 kids. Half of them new to the Christian experience, but happy to get lots of free meals. And the week went along, and it was truly a spiritual week.

And the last night of camp, we were in the auditorium, and various people speak, and awards and skits and whatnot. And then they said, rather offhandedly, anybody who's made a decision for Christ, come up front.

29 kids stood up right away, came to the front, and they committed them to the Lord. What was important to me was, nobody was crying, there was no campfire, it was not, oh, this is the last night of camp, this may be the only chance you'll ever, none of that.

[10:48] This was just a clean cut question. Do you want to trust, did you trust Christ this week? Did you come to understand him? Yes. So we were really encouraged by that.

And then, three weeks later, Valyuk had a baptism, and they had 49 kids baptized, and a lot of those were from camp.

It was a real encouraging thing, down in the ocean, people praying, baptizing, and we're really blessed by that. So that's kind of the cutting edge of things that are happening, that we're glad about, you should be glad about.

Then there's a lot of other stuff that's just life, sweeping up the church, settling arguments, caring for people who don't feel cared for. We're trying to do all of those things too.

So is Daniel. So, that's what's happening. You may have questions, and it could happen here, but if you want to ask afterwards questions about what God is doing, how we're doing, you can ask those.

[11:52] So we're open for that. Let's watch this video real quick. This is a Daniel production. And some of it fringe.

Okay. This is Dottie and I. This is Faith Academy. The auditorium.

Who are the citadel near ■■■?

This. For filling. The other person who is like being told through it in the United States. Thementeil, theastically line The Cody and McDonald's Res Laundie The Audrey government Steve, words do not adequately express the blessing you are to me and my children.

Your words of wisdom, teaching, chapel talks, OE adventures, sports, conversations, prayers are so appreciated.

[13:07] Personally, your presence as a kind father figure has been healing to me, having grown up with an abusive dad. Steve, I love you as a friend and am so thankful for you.

In Christ and for his glory alone, Beth. That was one of our parents at school who wrote that. There's my wheelchair.

These kids come to the house on Saturday. They work in the morning to earn something for school. And then they do Bible study for the afternoon. And thank you for your love and everything you've done for me.

There is no one like you. The young man on the left was scheduled to be baptized, but he ended up in jail that weekend. So he will get baptized, but he's walking with the Lord.

Go to God and use his name. This is Bible fellowship.

[14:51] And we remember the Lord just like you do here and like we will this morning. And then Sunday school class.

So let your face shine on earth. Mr. Clean. There is no one like you.

Every day from 530 to 6 we have morning prayer.

And we sing together. Pray for each other all the way around the circle. Share a little bit from the scripture.

We're done in 25 minutes. It's a great way to start each day. This is women's Sunday school class. This is a Sunday school seminar.

[16:08] And they asked Dottie to speak to DVBS teachers from several churches. And she was part of that program. And there we are at DFD.

18th birthday. Big deal. And us. Thank you.

Thank you. Okay. I'd like to share a little bit from the scripture this morning. If you'd look with me in Exodus chapter 17. Take out your iPads.

That was a shock for me for many years. I didn't realize people still used books. And when I saw my son take out his iPad years ago.

I thought he'd lost his faith. And I thought he was going to play video games. Anyway. I found out that that was the Bible too. Exodus chapter 17.

[17:16] There's a quick story here. That has encouraged and challenged me. And I've enjoyed. And let's read.

Starting in verse 8. Down through 13. It goes like this. Follow if you can. The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

Moses said to Joshua. Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill. With the staff of God in my hand.

And so Joshua fought at the Amalekites. As Moses had ordered. And Moses and Aaron and Hur. Went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands.

The Israelites were winning. Whenever he lowered his hands. The Amalekites were winning. When Moses hands grew tired. They took a stone and put it under him. And he sat on it.

[18:16] Aaron and Hur held his hands up. One on one side. One on the other. So that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekites.

The Amalekite army. With the sword. And then they go on. A couple of quick thoughts. Moses' role was not to be a soldier.

He was holding up the staff. Which was the power. And presence. Of God. And the people when you saw that.

You thought. God is with us. God is able. And they thought back to the negotiations with Pharaoh. Where they'd used that staff. And the crossing of the Red Sea.

Where they'd used that staff. And the finding of water. Where they'd used that staff. And they said. God has done these things. This is a symbol.

[19:13] That God is with us. And he's able. And Moses' job was that everybody could focus on that. God is with us.

And he's able. Just like he's with us this morning. And able. To work in us. And through us. And that's cool. That's really great.

And Moses' job was to say. Psst. Hoi. You guys. I'm here for you. God is here. And. You can do it. You can be. Useful for God. God's kind of people. And so. Moses lifts up his hands. And they go to battle. And in the battle.

Israel is fairly successful. And they look up. And they say. Oh there's Moses. He's our man. And there's the. Power and presence of God with us.

[20:10] That's great. And they're successful. But as time goes on. Moses. Gets tired. And the staff comes down.

And they look over. Up on the hill. And they can't quite see the guy. They say. Where is that guy? I. We can't see. Moses or the stick.

And. They're a little bit unsure. And they start to get kicked. And they start to lose the battle. Lose the game. And then. Aaron comes along.

And her. They say. Hey. We'll help you. Holds the stick up. They look over. Oh. There's our man. There's God's power and presence with us. We can do this.

And they kick the Amalekites. This is good. And. Apparently. During the day. People just get so tired. Hey.

[21:04] Get the stick down. Somebody get me a cup of coffee. Wow. This is. This is tough. And they say. Well. We're with you. Hands are up. Your children of Israel are victorious.

So the importance. Of lifting up your hands. Putting out the extra effort. To hold God's presence up before each other. And.

And. And hold God's power up. And remind each other. God can do it. Here. With us. And. He'll bless us. Let's do this together.

And. I think it's probably good for you to think about. God. Who lifts up your arms? Who helps you do it right? There are all kinds of people who do that.

Here in this fellowship. And if you're looking for help. Ask. And they'll hold your arms up. And the whole fellowship. Will be blessed. So.

[22:04] It's good to think about it. Who holds your arms up? Who helps you do it right? You're teaching Sunday school. Oh. These kids are so whiny. Why don't their parents discipline their children?

Or whatever they say in your Sunday school. And. And. And somebody says. Who encourages that teacher? Who gives them a clue? Who helps them out? And so you need to think about.

Who will hold up your arms. When you're doing it right? Find those people. Say. Help me out. Hold up my arms. I need your help. And. You need to think about.

Whose arms are you holding up? Are you helping the people. Who are doing it right? Because that's a big job. And a great responsibility. This is a reach.

But. One of my major responsibilities here in St. Louis during the summer. Is to sit in my son's backyard in the gazebo. And watch the geese. Okay.

[23:02] That's my job. I'm pretty good at it by now actually. If you ask me questions about these I'll give you some answers. But one of the things I noticed is when. The flock is messing around eating.

One mallard. One mallard. One mallard. Or two. Stand off. Head straight up. And they're watching. They're watching for the neighborhood puppy who likes to eat chickens.

They're watching for. My son. Who might shine his poison light at them and scare the ducks. And the mallards are watching for all of these things.

And then there are two or three moms in the flock who act like moms. They look. Everybody here. Everybody eating. Pop, pop, pop, pop. Where are all the kids?

And the mallard is watching for the cats and the dog and my son. And the moms are watching for all the kids that everybody gets to eat.

[24:02] It's a nice little thing. That's what I've learned this summer. Took me three weeks. Okay. And the message is somebody cares for the whole thing.

And it's a job. It's a responsibility. You hold your head up and keep your eye on it. And other people are watching out for parts of it. You're doing that here. Somebody, lots of people made breakfast. You guys do it great. Some people served me. That's even better. That's worth more points. And it's great. People are watching over the whole thing.

And people are doing the things. People are teaching me, helping us share God's word. That's incredible. Are you helping those people? You ever say to the person who leads your study group, thank you for leading the study group.

Thank you for helping me. Think about this. And you need to do that. That's holding up the arms of the people who are leading. In the purpose and presence of God.

[25:08] Power and presence of God. Make sure you're helping. And make sure you're thinking about whose arms you ought to hold up. You need to say to the music group, I am so glad you did that.

That's easier to say than that was really good. See if it's not too good. You can't. But you can always say, I'm so glad you did that. Thank you for doing it for all of us. I'm glad they do. I can't carry a tune.

It's a pathetic thing. So I'm blessed by those people who can make the strings work and the box work. And so you're serving all of us. And in doing that, you need to say to them, thank you for holding up our arms.

Thank you for blessing us. Thank you.

Thank you.

[26:51] their head, put it down, and do the same thing again. Quarter mile out, quarter mile back, exercise, exercise, log, log, log, boat, boat, boat, sand, sand, sand, boat, boat, boat.

This is incredible. And cowboys are watching this, and the coach of the cowboys said, and how do you pick 15 men out of each group? Out of 200 guys, they're going to take 30.

And they say, who are the 15 that you want to pick? The commander, who's a little, very mean person, has lots of scrambled eggs on his head and stars all over him, and he says, we've watched to see who holds their hands straight.

Everybody runs. Everybody does the push-ups. Everybody does this. Who does the most to hold up the boat? Who, when they're hurting, holds up the boat? I can see me on the side of the boat saying, well, I don't have to push so hard. Those guys are really doing a great job. But he said, we look for the guys who are spilling their guts to do the very best. They hold their arms straight, and that's how you make the seals. We picked the 15 straightest arms out of 100 young men who are all

fit.

And, of course, it's a great example of saying, do you hold your arms straight? Do you push to do your best? And to be part at the core? Are you putting out? Are you working at doing those things that God wants?

[29:11] Hold your arms straight, and God will bless you. Just like he blesses leaders who hold their arms up. He blesses people who help the leaders hold their arms up. And he'll bless you when you do those things.

Keep God in the picture in your life. Straighten your arms at the core. Push, not because of who's going to be there or what's happening, but because you want to be a servant of God in this place. Fight till sundown. Stay with it. The thing didn't end early. It ended after a whole day of fighting successfully. God will bless you.

Let me pray for you. Father, we thank you for this morning together. We thank you for your great faithfulness. We thank you that you love us so much and you give us the Lord Jesus Christ.

We just pray that you'll help us to not only hold up your word and your testimony in this place that we'll push to have strong arms honoring to you and we'll encourage each other and lift each other's arms up for your glory.

[30:34] So we're asking for your blessing, your continued work in us and we are thankful for all that you've done for us. Keep us and use us for your glory.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.