Mission Affirmed by Elliot Clark (Crossway, 2022, 253 pages)

1. **Seeking God's approval**
    1. It's not enough to evangelize, we must do so in the right manner so as to be approved by God (2Tm. 2:15).
    2. A missionary's life could still be unacceptable to God.
    3. Little success in an East Asia setting until one man brings thousands of dollars to a community through an NGO and many are now interested.
    4. One big challenge is some come to the faith of the missionary in hopes of getting the same kind of material success as he has.
    5. Christians shouldn't seek their own glory. We should seek glory (approval) from God. This should be one of the great ambitions for a missionary. It motivated Paul.
    6. There will be different levels of rewards and joy in Heaven.
    7. The chapter gets thick at times. Sounds like a doctroral paper he turned into a book.
    8. Not enough just to say faithfulness is the measure of success. Paul sometimes viewed fruitfulness as measure of God's calling upon him (1Co. 9:2; 2 cor 3:2). Good point.
    9. Paul's boasting was not only in salvations, but in the strength of a real church.
    10. Paul's great goal was not lots of conversions or rapid growth but a faithful witness of his converts where they moved to maturity.
    11. Author "led" a man to Christ, who then asked for $20 for a bus ticket but was never heard from again. Careful of connecting gospel to a better more comfortable life.
    12. "The goal of missions isn't quick gains but lasting results." (56)
    13. Paul was optimistic about his rewards in heaven because he didn't cut corners.
    14. "Divine commendation is not the birthright of every missionary." (57)
2. **Suffering with Christ**
    1. Author interacts with Schnabel. Good on him.
    2. Paul suffered. Carmichael was ahead of her time in that she never bended the truth to make her ministry sound better than it was. No triumphalism. No halo. She wrote "Things as they are" to show the unromantic side of missions.
    3. P. 62 was the most inspiring page of the book. Missions is hard and unromantic. Lack of interest, loneliness, language, sickness, idolatry. Don't want your sympathy, just telling the truth.
    4. Paul knew suffering, hardship, hunger, danger and being abandoned and betrayed by friends (2Cor. 11:23ff)
    5. Many of Paul's hearers were ashamed of Paul's trials. But Paul never responded by sugarcoating his trials. He even went the other way and gave a full description of them. He didn't exaggerate troubles, just was telling things as they are.
    6. Paul didn't want his hearers to be "unaware" of his affliction (2Co. 1:8-9).
    7. Author says many examples of Paul being pulled away from pioneer evangelism to help existing churches but not vice versa.
    8. Weakness: always up and about, never settling down in one place. There are many challenges that this kind of missionary will never know.
    9. Author says missionaries sometimes play "flexibility card too soon to cover their lack of preparation.
    10. Paul's constant moving seemed like weakness to the Corinthians.
    11. Suffering with Christ is a big part of our future glory.
    12. We have a week theology of suffering. We've made heaven into a participation trophy with few incentives for glory. But future rewards should motivate us (1Pt. 4:13).
3. **Sending and Being Sent**
    1. Missionaries aren't independent agents. They work with others for a co-mission.
    2. Paul never mentions money in 2Co. 8-9, though fundraising. Leaves money to very end in Romans. Paul says isn't out for money (Phil. 4:187).
    3. A lot of "amateurization" in missions. Anyone can be a missionary.

4. Concerning: he gives tons of examples of being in mission contexts all around the world, here and there, like a full-time traveler. Why not stay like you're suggesting?
5. Some think they're qualified because they're unqualified. Inability to them means humility.
6. Yes, Paul was an earthen vessel, but one that was honorable, and holy and fit (2tim. 2:21; 2cor. 4:7).
7. Individuals can be willing, but church must say if worthy, individuals may be free but church must say if fitted. This is why individual only support is a problem.
8. The general call to missions is a recent phenomenon and not present in Scripture. Calling for a general need for volunteers not common. In Bible, missionaries hand picked.
9. Author is well-read. Lots of footnotes and excellent books.
10. Paul had a lot of influence post-planting an indigenous church. Multiple visits and multiple letters. Not, I'm out of the way now that it is planted.
11. Author calls Romans "magisterial support letter" (100). Paul was only willing to pursue mission to Spain after he was confident his ministry had been fulfilled in Corinth (Rm. 15:19-20). This was after his third visit.
12. Paul said in Romans he didn't want to build on another man's foundation, even though he was teaching the Romans and seeking fruit with he church he never established!
13. "It's not enough to listen to national believers. You need to need them."
14. "Receiving support along the way is the overwhelming pattern within the NT (Rm. 15:24; 1Co. 16:6; 2Cor. 1:16; Ti. 3:13; 2Jn. 5-8).
15. "The solution to dependency isn't independence. It's interdependence." (104)
16. Three selfs doesn't mean goal is church needs nothing from missionary or sending church

4. **Seeing the Invisible**
    1. After a few years post-conversion, Paul goes to his hometown of Tarsus of Cilicia for ten years.
    2. Great story of James Fraser and his mother. Great missionary with CIM.
    3. Again, author is traveling all over the world teaching, but how can he know these cultures well to be effective?
    4. If our goal is quick multiplication of churches, then we're going to mistakenly give shallow, simple teaching so this can happen. Paul, however, wrote meaty doctrine.
    5. Paul's goal wasn't mere reproduction but spiritual maturity.
    6. Roland Allen gave some good three-self truths for indigenous churches that was helpful for that day, but missions has overcompensated. Now the missionary has no oversight and he has false humility and cultural embarrassment.
    7. Overwhelming mantra is "they can do ministry better than we can". Overstated. Paul called on cultural outsiders to imitate me. Paul rebuked
    8. Did Paul have confidence in the Corinthians? He oscillated wildly between yes and no. He's not always sure if Corinthians are really saved. Confidence and concern at same time.
    9. "You can't argue with results."
    10. Fraser was desperate for conversions. He asked for people back home to have special prayer each day, perhaps 30 minutes or so each day. Huge harvest. He later said his big problem was too much haste. All converts had was simple instruction. "My mistake has too often been that of too much haste."
5. **Speaking the Truth Sincerely**
    1. Paul speaks to the elders on Miletus.
    2. Distill Pauline missionary method to one word: "speaking".
    3. Missionaries assume many different identities to get and stay in a country.
    4. Some don't want the Pauline "speaking" strategy but the incarnational strategy of living a godly life to lead others to salvation.
    5. Some methods remove Jesus as Son of God to make it more palatable for Muslims.
6. **Setting Boundaries**
    1. Missionaries must call their hearers to leave their idolatry.
    2. Churches must ask prospective missionaries good questions, so as not to send out those that lead others astray (2Jn. 10/1Jn. 4:1)
    3. Story of hosts offering ceremonial lamb during Muslim holiday to show solidarity.

    4. Warnings about Insider Movements (e.g. worshipping Jesus in mosque or temple); in fact, praying to Mecca etc. is absolutely forbidden in Scripture.
7. **Sacrificing like the Savior**
    1. Now he's teaching in Haiti; later the Balkans and Romania. This doesn't make his case stronger. He's a short-termer, and even calls himself one.
    2. Careful of toxic giving that creates dependence. when is it ok to give?
    3. Paul poured out himself for others.
8. **Serving Christ and Stewarding the Gospel**
    1. Paul is difficult to follow because his method is complicated and his motivation multi-facited. He wasn't one-dimensional.
    2. Paul wasn't only interested in unreached groups. He wanted to continue to influence already planted churches. Before he went to Spain, he needed to fulfill his ministry in Corinth (Rm. 15:19-20).
    3. What may count as missionary success may be failure. Tough to self-evaluate (1Co. 4:3-4) .
    4. Thesis: those who faithfully and correctly evangelize around the world will receive great reward. They may also receive shame, loss and censure.
    5. We struggle to sacrifice financially and suffer physically; we don't humble ourselves. We're trying to go too fast.
    6. This book tries to explore an overlooked motivation for missions: God's approval. It guided Paul (1Cor. 4:5).

Books to read: Paradigms in conflict (Hesselgrave); The Open Secret (Newbigin), Suffering, Martyrdom... (Tson), Western Christians in Global Missions (Borthwick), Missions (Andy Johnson), A biblical theology of missions (Peters), Vission of the Possible (Sinclair), Test, Train, Affirm (Croft), Beyond the Ranges (Taylor), Paul's Missionary Methods, Plummer and Terry