

**THE LIFE
OF
DAVID BRAINERD
(1718 – 1747)**



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INTRODUCTION

Few lives since Biblical times, have had a greater impact on Christian missionary vision and enterprise, or set a higher example of personal holiness and devotion to God than that of David Brainerd. William Carey often called the father of modern missions, valued the story of Brainerd's life so highly that he encouraged his co-workers to read it through three times a year.

Brainerd was a missionary to the American Indians from 1743 – 1747. But he is also remembered for his daily practice of fervent prayer and single minded yearning for holiness. Andrew Murray writes:-

“Brainerd's example rebates the prayerlessness and Luke warmness of most Christian lives.”

The story of this remarkable man, whose life was so short but so full, will encourage us all to a greater devotion. David Brainerd's life demonstrates, as few others have done, what it means to live solely for the glory of God. His life so full of love to God and man, so devoted to the pursuit of holiness, so willing to sacrifice fame, fortune and even legitimate earthly comforts, shows that the truth of God is much more effective when it is backed up by a life without moral blemish. Oswald Smith wrote:-

“When I feel myself growing cold I turn to Brainerd and he always warms my heart. No man ever had a greater passion for souls. To live WHOLLY for God was his one great aim and ambition.”

PREFACE

David Brainerd (1715-1747) was an 'excellent person' with distinguished natural abilities. "He was the instrument of a most remarkable God. He ministered to the North American Indians of a different nation, education, manners and customs." It was these folk who experienced a wonderful and abiding alteration and moral transformation. He had great insight into human nature and ways, very discerning and judicious, distinguishing between real and solid purity and enthusiasm, between those affections that are natural and scriptural, having their foundation in light and judgment other than those that are founded in whimsical concepts, stray impressions on the imagination and carnal spirits.

These are the aspects of life that Jonathan Edwards looks into:-

1. The external actions and circumstances of Brainerd's life
2. Brainerd's turmoil and desires.
 - a) The change of his heart
 - b) The terrible melancholy that he suffered leading to dejection and despondency of spirit

Mr. Brainerd's impressions and melancholy often lead him to a most displeasing view of himself – a sense of his sinfulness, deficiency, unprofitableness and ignorance, looking on himself as worse than others.

David Brainerd greatly overworked himself and did not take much heed of his fatigues and strengths. The work on the Indian areas led to inevitable hardships and tiring circumstances. Yet for the sake of his Lord and out of obedience to his loving heavenly Father and Saviour David Brainerd, kept on keeping on!

Jonathan Edwards mentions that on his death bed Brainerd asked for a few parts of his diary to be destroyed, which for Jonathan would have been a great encouragement as it contained some of the great successes of his work with the Indians. It is from what remains that we have caught glimpses of this great man.

A single man, young and passionate whilst jealous for God's Kingdom he sought to win the souls of the lost Indians, to the detriment of his own health and eventually life. He definitely put into practice Luke 9:23 "If anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me"

HIS LIFE AND DIARY **(1718 – 1747)**

1. CALLED TO LIFE
2. CALLED TO EQUIP
3. CALLED TO GO

1. **CALLED TO LIFE**

A BRIEF LOOK AT BRAINERDS BACKGROUND

David Brainerd was born on April 20, 1718 at Haddam a town of Hatford county in Connecticut, New England. He came from a Christian family. His father Hezekiah and mom Dorothy had strong views about those being irreligious and sought to serve the gospel most faithfully in Haddam. Hezekiah was one of the officials within that specific colony. Although David, the third son of his parents was fatherless at the age of nine and an orphan at fourteen, the seal that was focused on God by his parents and grandparents before, became a blessing to their whole family and went beyond to other cultures, reminding us clearly of the covenant that God made to faithful Abraham “I will make you a blessing to all nations”

THE LIFE OF AN ORPHANED TEENAGER ; CALLED BY GOD.

Brainerd recounts that he was quite a morbid child, quiet and prone to much thought, until the age of seven or eight, he never thought much about that which wronged God but then was struck by a deep concern for his soul, which led him to fear death and destroyed his desire to play games and enjoy life as children do. This brief period in his life led him to times of prayer in secret, and was probably encouraged in sincerity because of the death of his father Hezekiah in 1727

Life went on until the age of thirteen – the terrible teens – then all his security and hopes of heaven and happiness were shattered as he caught a bug that was going around in Haddam. He was a diligent boy doing as he was told and loved reading, but his sole interest was not in the world but in the things of his soul – “Almost I was persuaded to be a Christian”

The death of his mother in March 1732 compounded his depression about life, but then his 'religious' concerns declined and, although he kept up his secret prayer life, he was back into that secure feeling again that overtakes one so young and nothing can conquer them.

The following year 1733, David Brainerd at the age of fifteen left home to stay in Haddam for the next four years. He describes this period "without God in the world"

THE CAREER - Hunt

Brainerd tried farming first, in April 1737 at nineteen years of age for a whole year, but began to long for liberal education. He decided to study on his own. He took this decision very seriously so he decided that the ministry was for him.

In April 1738, Brainerd joined Mr. Fizke who advised him to abandon young company and to only seek the company of the elder. Religion filled his life – note it was religion – not a relationship, and although he gave his time to prayer and "secret "duties " And even the word preached, he was not yet converted, but the spirit was moving. He recalls that he had "a very good outside"

Brainerd continued his learning with his brother after Mr. Fizke had died, but still his security lay in his "good works" - on a "self-righteous foundation"

THE FEAR OF GOD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

"In the winter of 1738, it pleased God, on one Sabbath Day morning as I was walking out, to give me on a sudden such a sense of danger, and the wrath of God, that I stood amazed, and all my former good thoughts vanished, and from the view that I had of my sin and vileness, I was much distressed all day fearing the vengeance of God would soon overtake me" (Oswald T Smith and Men of God pg 13)

"If any of you lacks wisdom he should ask God" 1 Tim 5a...This is just what David did he set apart a day praying and fasting that God would show mercy on him and open his eyes to see the evil of sin, and the way of life by Jesus Christ. And God, rich in His love and kindness opened his eyes to discover many things about his heart, but his trust still lay in his duties. It was these very things God used to show his helplessness, sometimes Brainerd thought that God was pleased with him and soon he would be reconciled to God. We hardly ever hear of this ... but Brainerd "longed for greater conviction of sin" on a daily basis.

As much as he desired this, the Lord disclosed to him the dreadfulness of his heart, he began to be so totally aware of the damnation he deserved – and the one night in particular he wrote "I feared the ground would cleave asunder under my feet, and become my grave and send my soul quick into hell before I could get home." It was soon after

this that he was brought to a place in his life that he realized he was totally lost and that his cries or pleas were worth nothing.

On Sunday 12th July 1739, Brainerd was out walking again in a solitary place. He was trying to pray, but he was more concerned about the feeling that the Spirit of God had left him. It was then that the way of Salvation opened to him and he was amazed that he could ever have thought of any other way

He wrote:- “The way of salvation opened to me with such intimate wisdom, simpleness and excellency, that I wondered I should ever think another way. I wondered that all the world did not see and comply by the righteousness of Christ.”

2. CALLED TO EQUIP HIMSELF

In September 1739 he went to Yale College in New Haven. Concerned by the amount of time and discipline, his pears were all focused on the strictness of religious life. God was gracious to him and made Himself known to him. He was busy praying and doing some introspective searching – “and the Lord so shined into “his” heart that (he) enjoyed full assurance of His favour. His soul was extremely refreshed “with clearness, power and sweetness” through the Word of God.

Brainerd loved to go out walking, and so was out walking one afternoon in the fields 17th June 1740 that he discovered such a delight in God that he couldn't handle still having to be in this evil world. God used this wonderful delight in His glory to turn his focus to others. David Brainerd was so affected by the beauty of the Lord that his love for all mankind overwhelmed him so and he wanted those he loved to enjoy what he had enjoyed about God. “It seemed to be a little resemblance of heaven”

He returned to College and experienced this spiritual high for about 6 weeks. The Lord so strengthened him in his faith that he felt that nothing would ever move him from the love of God in Jesus Christ. Even all the pleasures of this world would not exceed just one hour with God, so he reckoned.

But there always comes that familiar challenge of temptation. Late January 1741 he grew ‘cold and dull’ and the ambition of his studies seized him, but the Spirit was moving through the ministry and preaching of George Whitefield an awakening spread over the the college. This was the “beginning of that extraordinary religious commotion through the land.”

It was during these years of the awakening that David Brainerd in his third year at Yale was expelled. He had been asked by a fellow student about a certain professor “He has no more grace than this chair.” Was his reply and to his shame was expelled for it.

With this shame at his doorstep, without any hope of reconciliation to Yale despite the various intercessors Brainerd realized fully that it was totally by God's Grace that you have been saved.

On Friday 2nd April 1742 Brainerd records in his diary – Some time past, I had much pleasure in the prospect of the heathen being brought home to Christ, and desiring that the Lord would improve me in that work.

This was the first inkling that Brainerd was to go cross culturally on his mission but as the Lord equipped him more and more to serve Him. As much as this happened and his love for the Lord grew more and more, so did his desire to die. He thought that death – and time enough - would bring him nearer to the Lord to experience his divine and special love. Brainerd, was not so wrapped up in this experience of God's love that he forgot his sinfulness. – no, he was more and more convicted of his own sinfulness and vileness, the public disgrace of being expelled. He began to commit himself to suffering the greatest amount in the cause of Christ and was prepared to even be banished from the heathen if it meant their salvation of their soul, and so began his wrestle - which he considered a privilege, to pray for others for the kingdom of Christ.

Thoughtful challenge

So many of us students who feel called to the mission field are prepared to go through the mental preparation and tuition of studying doctrine etc, yet we are not prepared to alter our spiritual lives to be so affected as his was :-

- to suffer first for Christ
- to wrestle in prayer for the unsaved
- to be “expelled from the world because of it.”

Throughout April 1742 this commitment to pray and intercession for the salvation of the heathen increased.

April 8 “Had raised hopes today of the heathen. Oh that God would bring in greater numbers of them to Jesus Christ!”

As much as he prayed for the heathen, he prayed that God would school him effectively and equip him for service. At Christ's school he prayed for great fitness for his service by teaching the greatest

Lesson of humility

He longed for special graces and feared that he would not be serviceable, he couldn't do anything on his own but realized that all his strength and hope for his future lay in God alone. “Blessed be the Lord, he is never unmindful of me, but always sends me needed supplies, and from time to time, when I am like one dead raises me to life.”

Lesson of purity and holiness . Was next on Brainerd’s equipping – and he longed more and more for communion with Christ and the mortification of indwelling corruption and any spiritual pride, then began his longings for God and a conformity to His will in inward purity and holiness.

Monday April 19th

Brainerd, set the day apart for fasting and prayer to prepare for the ministry. He prayed for divine aid and direction and in His own time to send him into the harvest. “He prayed with wisdom as he fervently interceded for the furtherance of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ knowing that it would cost:

- i) suffering
- ii) hardships
- iii) distress
- iv) death - all for the promotion of the Gospel and conversion of the “poor heathen”

Thoughtful challenge

It is hardly ever that we hear of those preparing for the ministry desiring lessons in humility - although graciously the Lord endows us with them Do the students of today, in this rat race world desire purity and holiness as They seek the limited opportunities in the church, which can hardly afford to pay their ministers? Are these future missionaries prepared for the suffering, hardships, distress and death that they might endure for the sake of the Gospel. Furthermore are they so desiring that for the extension of our Lord’s Kingdom? Perhaps I have been too shallow in my conversation that these desires and lessons for the sake of the Gospel seem distant from my peers and even myself.

Even on meaningful and special days David Brainerd was concerned primarily for God’s Kingdom and the extension of it. On his 24th birthday a time when most people are concerned about themselves, he records in his diary. “I wanted to wear out my life in His service and for His glory.”

Prayer and fasting went along with Brainerd’s desire to be more holy and sanctified to be like the Lord Jesus. Monday June 14th was set aside for secret fasting and prayer. “to entreat God to direct and bless me with regard to the great work I have, in view of preaching the Gospel.” And then again 4 days later feeling inadequate and unfit for the ministry, “My present deadness and total inability to do anything for the glory of God” Brainerd prayed some more and was completely devoted to God as his soul sought after the holiness of the Lord. This continued for that whole month and eventually on July 29th he was examined by the Association which met at Danberry and he received his license to preach.

The first sermon he records was from Job 14:14 – “What he tears down cannot be rebuilt, the man he imprisons cannot be released.” Indians, his listeners cried out in distress

New Haven proved to be a wonderful stepping stone for Brainerd, not so much into a dazzling preaching career, but for a closer and more intimate relationship with the Lord and more of a stranger to the world. September 4th he prayed for his brother John to become more of a stranger to the world to enable him to serve better. While on the 6th September they wanted to “prison” him for his preaching at New Haven.

Thursday November 4th – “Oh for holiness! Oh for more of God in my soul!... Wednesday 24th November came to New York, put up many earnest requests to God for His help and direction; was confused with the noise and tumult of the city – enjoyed but little time lone with God, but my soul longed for Him.

Lords Day January 23, 1743 ... Brainerd writes ... “I saw that I was not worthy of a place among the Indians, where I am going, if God permit.” ... **Wednesday February 2nd** .. preached my farewell sermon last night ... having taken leave of friends, I set out on my journey towards the Indians.

3. CALLED TO GO

David Brainerd, now equipped with the greatest lesson of all, his own sinfulness, knowing his incapacities and with a strong desire and need of the Lord was called to go to the Indians. On Friday 19th November 1742, Brainerd had received a letter from the Reverend Mr. Pemberton of New York to meet him to discuss the whole issue about going to the Indians. David prayed with friends about it and then consulted a Mr. Mills in Ripton over the issue.

The interview that he underwent in New York drained him completely as the Scottish Society for propagating Christian knowledge examined David about his Christian experience and his acquaintance with the divinity. He felt even more inadequate for the task. And so with this very “healthy” humble attitude Brainerd was dependent on the Lord for everything as he set out to the Indians

3.1 OBEDIENCE IS THE MISSION OF THE GREAT COMMISSION 1743 - 1745

Then Jesus came to them and said “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and made disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age’
Matt.28:18-20

As Brainerd prepared to go, in fact was going he records tremendous spiritual conflict... He described them as being in hell itself and was deprived of any sense of God, even of the being of God. This torment not only spurred him on but showed him how only true happiness is gained through total and utter dependence on God the creator. It also showed the continuous battle that there is, despite the outside one to go, the inner one to obey!

(i) KAUNAUMEEK

On the 1st April, 1743, Brainerd rode to Kaunaumeeek 20 miles from Stockbridge. His home was a pile of straw, and once again faced with such hard trials, and he endured great inner turmoil and distress

His first sermon was on the 10th April 1743 to Indians; he arose early spent time in prayer and meditation and then went to preach both before noon and after-noon. The response was orderly and there was a last response and one woman's heart, she confessed, cried ever since she heard him preach. They were convicted of their sin!

(ii) Brainerd even though he was visited by an Irishman and a Dutchman was lonely. He felt distressed at the worldliness of man, and then whilst out on the mission was alone, save for one man who could speak English, and this was his interpreter – “an ingenious young Indian belonging to Stockbridge who name was John . He had been instructed in the Christian Religion by Mr. Seargeant, had lived with the Reverend Mr. Williams of Long Meadow; had been further instructed by him at the charge of Mr. Holts of London. He understood both English and Indian very well and wrote a good hand” Not only was he lonely and still almost homeless but was once again depressed about his own sinfulness. In May he spent seven days building himself a little cottage which brought on some relief to his spiritual distress. He still had no Christian companion.

Not only was Brainerd concerned about the spiritual well being but also of the Indians home life. The Indians had no land to live on but that which the Dutch people lay claim to and they threatened to drive them off. The Dutch had no concern for their spiritual well being. The Dutch were also against Brainerd, because he came to preach to them.

On May 30th, Brainerd set out to New Jersey to meet with those who had commissioned him, in order to set up a school for the Indians at Kaunaumeeek and to also ensure that his interpreter might be appointed schoolmaster.

(iii) Making sure of the correct and suitable diet might have aided Brainerd's spiritual distress a considerable amount. His body became weak and ailed much as he was unable to get food. He had to send out 15 miles for bread and by the time he got to eat it, it was often sour, that's if he could get enough, when he had the opportunity to go himself and to overcome the obstacles of traveling on his horse - which often lost itself in the woods or Brainerd was too busy. Food is an important part of any mans health and mental state and Brainerd soon learnt the rich blessing of the Indians food with all its goodness

Jonathan Edwards records that in August 1743, Brainerd was exceedingly weak in body and with much pain, but his concern was for fodder for his horse and thereafter too weak to study or work, was much concerned with holiness and perfect conformity to God. Tuesday August 23rd -... "The thoughts of death and immortality appeared very desirable and even refreshed my soul, those lines turned in my mind with pleasure -

'come death shake hands;
I'll kiss thy hands
Tis happiness for me to die'

Although with just straw for a bed in his lonely little cottage, little healthy food, great depression that his longings for death seemed the only sense of relief and the illness that seemed to be overtaking him Brainerd was still obedient to the great commission and preached and taught the Indians, praying most devoutly for their conversion by the gracious mercy of God.

After his visit to New Haven at the end o August, he rode to Stanwich and preached there to a large congregation and then went on to Horse Neck. It was here that he found a little relief in his distress - he was able to pray with Christian friends and to listen to ministers discourse. It was during this time that Brainerd and Jonathan Edwards met. Edwards writes of him "There truly appeared in him a great degree of calmness and humility, without the least appearance of rising of spirit for any ill treatment he supposed he had suffered."

(iv) The whole issue about his statement concerning Mr. Whittersey in particular and the tutor at Yale College whom he criticized - seemed to trouble him a great deal, he submitted on his writings concerning himself that the selectors of Yale were prepared to accept him back with the advice of Reverend Mr. Burr of Newmark. But although they would accept him back they would not "issue him with the degree, unless he remained at Yale for a year. The Scottish Society had not expected that amount of time and nor had Brainerd, so he refused the offer, he desperately wanted the degree but didn't want to waste the time "(My own interpretation of the events")

He returned to Kaunaumeeek on October 4th after a period of illness and distress. He writes. "The poor Indians appeared very glad of my return." He began teaching the Indians to sing Psalms. He received news of the threat of war with France from Col. Stoddard two weeks after his return and that he might be in danger where he was situated, but this made him more sincere and urgent in his preaching and mission to the Indians

October 23rd - two or three came to Brainerd concerned for their souls and Brainerd was able to talk things over with them. This encouraged him somewhat, but it was in November that Brainerd changed slightly After reading 1 Kings 17, 18 and 19 and 11 Kings 2 and 4, he longed for the God of Elijah to make himself known, not only to him but to the people ... His soul was strengthened .. 'nothing seemed too hard for God to perform, nothing too great for me to hope for from Him.'

**His perspective changed - not on what he could do –
and was able to do for God. But to what Almighty
God could do**

As he turned to Exodus and saw the glorious works of God saving and rescuing His people there, his soul was refreshed and strengthened, not seeing his weakness and vileness, but God's greatness and strength.

(v) He then worked his way through Israel's history - of the land of Canaan Hezekiah and his request and the power of God revealed to him. David and his trials. This encouraged him greatly and even though he was ill and in a great deal of pain he worked hard and traveled far despite the weather and the time.

**Obedience costs, but with God's strength
His servants are invincible.**

On Friday November 4th David Brainerd rode to Hinderhook, via Hudson River. He found it rather stressful with the strain coming mainly from the continuous company of those who had no regard for God. This seemed to really affect him as for the whole of the week following he was depressed and ill.

On November 29th as he started learning the Indian tongue, with the help of Mr. Sergeant. The Commissioner who employed him, had directed him to spend much time this winter of 1743 to learn the language. This meant he had to ride twenty miles in uninhabited woods between Stockbridge and Kaunaumeeek. This meant he was exposed to extreme hardship and severe weather conditions which did his health no good

Stockbridge the following day. Two days later he went to the Ordination of Mr. Hopkins. His new Years eve was spent travelling back from Stockbridge home, but the weather was so drastically cold that he thought he would die from it.

(vi) 1744

David Brainerd spent January in much spiritual dryness much of his time was taken up in travelling to and from language classes and this left little time or energy for quiet times - (effective ones at least) Towards the end of February he travelled to Sheffield and then he experienced a horrid time of self-loathing for his lifeless temper and sluggishness of spirit.

From his diary we see that February involved my prayer and fasting as he longed for God's grace and mercy to be bestowed upon him so that he could have more patience in dealing with his experience of melancholy.

March saw his last public service at Kaunaameek, but his love for his people - the Indians increased, but he was now compelled to minister to them much more discreetly until 15 March when he left Kaunaameek to go to Sheffield where he met a messenger for East Hampton who was to invite him to go there and to settle there. There was much trouble there, that Brainerd was concerned about yet he was not sure that was where God wanted him. In Salisbury on 18th March, he complains of being so ill he could hardly walk, - what was wrong with him – cancer or ... After this he went to New York and New Jersey preaching along the way, at the encouragement of Christian friends, finally arriving in New York on 28th March and then travelled three days later to work among the Delaware Indians

April 5th He records: “Attended the Commissioners Meeting. Resolved to go on still with the Indian's affair, if divine providence permitted; although I had before felt some inclination to go to East Hampton, where I was solicited to go. “Jonathan Edwards writes that in this meeting there were two options given to him, that he move on with Mr. Sergeant at Stockbridge and continue his ministry among the Indians or to leave and go to the Delaware Indians. It seemed as if Brainerd had a bit of personality clash with Sergeant, by the way it was shown that he should leave.

(vii) Brainerd then traveled to New York and from thence to New /England, and went to his native town of Haddam where he arrived on Saturday April 14th ... He spent some days among his friends at East Hampton. After this he visited several ministers in Connecticut and traveled towards Kaunaameek and came to Mr. Sargeant at Stockbridge 26th April. He then collected his clothes and proceeded to the Indians on the Delaware River in Pennsylvania.

The settlement that Brainerd travelled to was a settlement of Irish and Dutch people, twelve miles from Delaware. Brainerd found his new area very discouraging, the Indians according to the interpreter were scattered and so were the Dutch and the Irish, and no one seemed concerned about Religious matters. On May 20th Brainerd began consecrating the Sabbath amongst the Delawarian Indians. He preached twice and then the following week introduced the Sabbath to the white people.

Monday 28th May he set out, according to orders, on a journey towards Newmark in New Jersey. He stayed at Black River, Newmark. Brainerd was to meet with the Presbytery to discuss his Ordination at 3 o'clock that same afternoon (11 June) he preached his ordination probation sermon from Acts 26:17-18 – “Delivering thee from their own people and from the Gentiles” Afterwards passed an exam before the Presbytery and on Tuesday 12th June 1744 he was ordained - after further examination of his experiences, acquaintance with Christianity was approved of. The Preacher was Mr. Pemberton who by God's grace instilled in Brainerd even more of a sense of commitment and responsibility and the trust that was committed to him. This is what Mr. Pemberton wrote to the Society in Scotland concerning Brainerd; That he “appeared uncommonly qualified for the work of the ministry. He seems to be armed with a great deal of self denial and animated with a noble zeal to propagate the gospel among those barbarian nations, who have long dwelt in darkness”

4. ORDAINED YET UNCHANGED - 1744 - 1745

Brainerd's vision did not change or loose any zeal. Brainerd's dependence was even more on God than before, not relying on his title at all

Brainerd's ministry didn't change because of his ordination as some folks today do, they get so bogged down with administration and other things that the importance of preaching the gospel is lost. Although Brainerd did report back to Scotland and these accounts did take considerable time. (June 13th 1744 for example) His focus was still on preaching the gospel.

He still suffered tremendously in his health. He writes on the 14th June “God is very gracious to me in health and sickness and intermingles much mercy with all my afflictions and toils” This shows how great his relationship with God was still going.

He was also greatly concerned with the translation of prayers into the Indians language, even though the interpreter was totally unused to the idea.

His prayer life deepened – “Was enabled to cry to God for my poor Indians (His love for them taking on a compassionate father like character); though the work of their conversion appeared impossible with man, yet with God I saw all things were possible.

His concern not only sought to meet their spiritual concerns, but also their physical and social concerns. He writes “rode several miles to see if I could procure any lands for the poor Indians, that they might live together and be under better advantages for instruction. He sought to sort out the practical problems of the ministry.

His preaching continued although sometimes he experienced that he was preaching without any heart and a bareness, yet as he depended on God and acted in faith

that some of the Indians followed him to his meeting and preaching with the Dutch and Irish.

Then the struggle for souls began. Brainerd was faced with the Indians Tribal Feast “an idolatrous feast and dance” He was much burdened by this and prayed much about it, he didn’t leave it there. He went to the festivities and managed to stop it in an orderly fashion and began to preach. He taught them twice that day and it seemed as if God were not present, but He was, there was “only” a spiritual battle going on. Brainerd did feel spiritually despondent too, about this event and fell prey to the devils tempting of doubting there was a God to save the heathen and convert them.

Not only did Brainerd meet them and confront their worldly and paganistic rituals but also did door to door visiting as recorded 6 October 1744, and he invited them to come and listen to the word the following day, hoping that this would challenge the hunting design. He preached on the Sunday and on the Monday, two days after his last door to door visitation he went early to catch them before they left for hunting, but instead was invited to preach again and then encouraged, he answered their objections against Christianity and apologetics.

Fellowship took a great deal more effort, but was essential to him. He rode to Rochaticus where he would meet with Mr. Jones, he loved the communion of the believers, especially the ministers who endured the same trials.

It was only in November – six months afterwards that he began to concentrate on his living accommodation. This enabled him to get into his prayer and fasting routine again - but I have noticed that as soon as he withdrew he became more and more depressed and inward looking, with this attitude he found he had no effect in preaching.

In was only in December, that Brainerd began to see some results of God’s faithfulness to his work in the Indians. David believed that his interpreter was enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak with power, because he himself was convicted by sin. The listeners too were affected as tears rolled down their cheeks.

March 7th 1745 Brainerd set out on a journey to New Jersey to meet a friend who was going to help him raise support so that he could get a colleague in his great work. He travelled on this deputation exercise all the way to New York, New England and returned 5 weeks later. In the middle of April he left for Philadelphia to persuade the Governor, who was greatly interested in the six nations, to give to him permission to work amongst Indians in Susquehannah, which he was allowed to do with Mr. Beaty a Presbyterian Minister. He went to Susquehannah to spend a fortnight there, but got ill to the point of passing blood. He thought he was going to die out there with his beloved Indians.

4. GOD'S WORK OF GRACE - JUNE 19TH 1745

Brainerd now began to look at another area of ministry - the Indians at Crossweeksung In New Jersey. His first sermon was to seven or eight woman and children. He was keen to return the following day, and was surprised as the women requested more time so they could like the women from Samaria (John 4) go and tell everyone to come and see the man who told them everything that they had done. On June 22 he preached for the third time to this enlarged group who were convicted of their sin and sought deliverance - even the very ones who had previously rejected the interpreter, who had tried to teach them about Christianity. They began to respond as a whole group, urging him to preach twice a day on occasions. He then made sure that these Indians were sure of all they had heard from him, and then Brainerd decided it was important to get back to the Fort of Delaware, July 1745

Conversions at Fort Delaware began with his interpreter and wife, they were duly baptized. This was quite an exciting event for Brainerd as he explains it and shows how through friendship evangelism, his interpreter a heavy drinker won through the gospel. The baptism only made the Indians at Delaware even more concerned for the welfare of their own souls.

In August, Brainerd returned to Crossweeksung. Here he invited the perishing sinners to come to Christ, twenty responded with tears. After much discourse on August 6th two found relief in Christ. The preaching continued and numbers continued to grow consistently. On August 8th he wrote "Afterwards when I spoke to one and another more particularly whom I perceived under much concern, the power of God seemed to decent upon the assembly "Like a rushing mighty wind" I stood amazed at the influence that seized the audience almost universally and could compare it to nothing more aptly than the irresistible force of a mighty torrent or swelling deluge ... all persons of all ages were bowed down with concern together and scarce one was able to withstand the shock of the surprising operation. Old men and women who had been drunken wretches for many years, and some little children (under six) seemed in distress for their souls. "Even the most stubborn of hearts was forced to bow etc: (Journal Part 1) "There was one lady who was so distressed and convicted by the Spirit - that you could almost say she was slain in the spirit "She could neither go nor stand, nor sit on her seat without being held up". (pg 144 Brainerd's Journal Part 1) He recounts to the Scottish supporters a whole lot of incidents and concerns put forward by the new Christians - some were having affairs and were now convicted of the wickedness of it he writes - "They were yet hungry and thirsty for the Word of God and appeared unwearied in their attendance upon it. " There were now altogether 95 converted Indians at Crossweeksung, even the most oldest and most "obstinate idolater" gave up his rattles without Brainerd being concerned, but the power of the Holy Spirit.

Brainerd decided to go further afield so in September he left for the Indian town called Shaumoking. He was welcomed by this larger tribe with much traditional celebration. Brainerd visited the Delewarian king. This was a strategic move to get the king in favour of Christianity and then the tribe/peoples ½ Delawarian and the rest Senalies and Tatelas. From here he moved to visiting town after town which he had visited in 1744 and been welcomed, but now they had turned back to their heathen practices. Brainerd describes that although these Indians had greater understanding of English, they were very vicious in their paganistic traditions. (Read account of September 22 1745 for details) Brainerd's attempts to Christianize here were unfruitful..

October 1745 saw him back at Crossweeksung in New Jersey, where once again there was tremendous awaking unto the Lord. There was much spiritual growth happening as well as baptisms. It was amazing how the Indians accepted him despite their adverse reaction to the other white people.

On November 20th 1745 he writes in his journal "I have now ridden more than 3000 miles that I kept an exact account of, since the beginning of March last (1744). Almost the whole of it has been in my own proper business as a missionary, upon the design of propagating Christian knowledge among the Indians. .

5. THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF A REMARKABLE WORK OF GRACE - NOVEMBER 24th 1745 - JUNE 19th 1746

CROSSWEEKSUNG, NEW JERSEY, NOVEMBER 1745

The topics of Brainerd's sermons and preaching was on Christ. - Zachaeus (Luke 19:9), the Lords transfiguration (Luke 9: 28-36), Lazarus (Luke 16:19=26) His basis was always the Bible, the one most profound response was from a lady who cried out "Oh to be with Christ! I do not know how to stay." He then decided it was time for the establishment of the Assemblies shorter Catechism to be learnt. They were ready spiritually to answer all the questions that Brainerd posed to them.

Surprising conviction and works of God can be seen and read on December 26th 1745 Especially the one recording, the conversion of the woman with a vision, she feared that her sins would not let her come to Christ.

So with the preaching going on, the Catechism being instilled "God made this a powerful season to some, as they concerned about their souls, came to know Christ."

FOLKS OF DELAWARE IN PENNSYLVANIA = FEBRUARY 1746

Brainerd uses another strategy now - he takes some Indians with him to converse with the Indians here about Christianity. This had some affect, as some seemed to respond He also found the opportunity of ministering to the white people too and have the Lord work in their hearts and minds. As he continued to preach to the High Dutch people so the Indians came to join them.

CROSSWEEKSUNG, NEW JERSEY MARCH 1746

Once again he began preaching and teaching and many more became awakened, there were now 130 people and it was in this season that the Lord's supper was introduced to the Indians. There was a great deal of rejection of the Indians who were converted, they were thrown out. TILL THE END OF HIS LIFE OCTOBER 1746.

Brainerd's work continued with much travelling and preaching but at the same time started to suffer tremendous spells of melancholy and then much ill health - but he still continued travelling and preaching in order to minister to his Indians. At some stages And on some journeys he was so ill that he was coughing blood. Eventually he realized that he needed to head homewards towards Christian fellowship and to friends in Philadelphia.

AFTER HIS RETURN FROM HIS LAST JOURNEY TO SUSQUEHANNAH UNTIL HIS DEATH 1746, 1747

September 1746 - Saw him barely managing to handle all the responsibilities quite ill and not being strengthened at all.

October he gained a little strength to visit the Indians in Cranbury and even helped them in directing them to mend the fence around their wheat (October 27th)

November 3rd David Brainerd, took leave of the Indians and his work among them. They were very troubled and concerned about it all and many cried at his leaving.

HIS ILLNESS AT ELIZABETH TOWN

November 5th to February 1747 he stayed with friends, his health deteriorating all the while and he was getting more and more run down and depressed.

February – He was visited by one of his Indian congregants and this gave him much encouragement, as they were growing in the Lord.

April - He was about a lot more - He married Rev. Mr. Dickenson and attended the Ordination of his friend Mr. Tucker. On 10th April he found his brother John, who had been sent for by the correspondents (Scottish) to take care of Mr. Brainerd's Indians. John Brainerd left for the Indians on 14th April 1747 "This day my brother went to my people."

HIS RETURN TO NEW ENGLAND:

He arrived in East Haddam about the beginning of May. May 28th he travelled from Long Meadow to Northampton and came in contact with Jonathan Edwards, who had met him four years previously, but only in dealing with his confession about the professor. He began to converse with the Edwards family, and even had the opportunity to join with them in family prayers, which Edwards says his one petition was "That we might not outlive our usefulness." It was also at the Edwards house that he eventually got to see a doctor who could not confirm that he was going to get better or that he had Consumption, but was encouraged to keep on riding as this would extend his life. He did and rode to Boston.

June: His illness got worse, with ulcers on his lungs. It was a very bad state. Jonathan Edward's daughter was with him and she writes "Dr Pynction says he has no hopes of his life." He carried on getting worse to the point where they all thought he was going to die, but he didn't. His brother Israel Brainerd came to visit him, this was a visit of mixed blessing, the joy and encouragement of seeing and conversing with his brother and hearing the news that his sister, Spencer had died at Hadden.

July, 25th He returned to North Hampton and he gradually decayed, becoming weaker and weaker "But the whole time his mind was preoccupied and his speech consisted of the nature of true Religion in heart and practice as distinguished from various counterfeits. He often manifested his dislike for the doctrines of Antinomianism and Separatists. His mind was always and only fixed on the mercy and wonder of God.

September: His brother John came to visit, to encourage him and through the reading of his diary Brainerd was deeply encouraged. As he got more and more ill, his feet swelling and his symptoms worsening he wrote “The day, I trust is at hand, the perfect day, oh the day of deliverance from all sin” (Sept 7th) Next Brainerd started writing letters for the propagation of the Gospel in New England.

It was amazing how Brainerd in this great time of need sought only the furtherance of the Gospel and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the ministries so that this end might be met. A tremendous relationship developed with Jonathan Edward’s daughter Jerusha, who was nursing him, the whole time telling her of the great blessings he thought his longings were not for recovery or release, but that the Church of Christ on earth might flourish.

David Brainerd died on Friday 4th October 1747 at 6 o’clock. He had given the most beautiful departing speech to his much loved Jerusha, who also died on the 14th February at the age of 18. She was much like Brainerd in temperament, and had looked after him for 19 weeks while he was ill. Brainerd expressed to Jonathan Edwards about her “She had manifested a heart uncommonly devoted to God and beyond any woman whatsoever he knew”

To her he said:- ...”I have committed all my friends to God and can leave them with God. Though, if I had thought I should not see you and be happy with you in another world, I could not bear to part with you, but we shall spend a happy eternity together.

CONCLUSION

David Brainerd’s life was one of intense religious affection. His primary concern was his relationship with God and the deep desire that he had for the lost was so real that in sickness and in health he acted for the conversions of those Indians which he called my people

Brainerd was an example of that saying “Pray as if everything depends on God and act as if everything depends on you.”

He once wrote:-

**“I wanted to wear myself out in His service, for His glory
I cared not how or where I lived, or what hardships I went
through, so long as I could but gain souls for Christ.”**

What an example!