

Worship, Community, Mission: What Do We Mean By Mission?

Acts 1:1-8

Introduction/Summary of series

What about lives? --important, but not sufficient

Philippians 2:14-15 *Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world...*

*Transformed lives are important, but **they cannot save**. No one sees our good works and is redeemed by those good works. No one comes to know Jesus or his message simply by observing our integrity or love or sacrifices. Marriage example...*

1. The People of the Mission

- a. Every disciple is to follow Jesus
- b. We *are* all witnesses....(cf. 2 Cor. 5:20)
- c. Saved and Strengthened in order to be sent 1 Peter 2:9

2. The Plan for the Mission – “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the utter most parts of the earth”

- a. It has gone global. (Gen 12, Psalms and Prophets Acts 13:47; Luke 10)
- b. Worship is with community and is community (last week – 1 Pet 2:5)
- c. Community is for the mission (Phil 2:14-16)

“How do you see the invisible God? By looking at the local Christian congregation... God intends to display his glory through the local church today, as Christians live together in patience, forgiveness, justice, mercy and love. We reflect God’s own character by the character of our congregation’s life...”

--Mark Dever

- d. Worship as Mission (1 Pet 2:5; 1 Cor 14:25)
- e. Life as Mission/Layers of a “missional lifestyle”

Levels of Communication

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Participating (rubbing shoulders) | 1. Chit-Chat |
| 2. Serving non-Christians and with non-Christians | 2. Life Talks |
| 3. Sharing Life – meals, | 3. Heart talks |
| 4. Gospel | 4. Gospel talks |

*Be purposeful about the mundane, the typical, your existing plans

*Where you have an “open door,” move things “toward the gospel”

“Evangelism is not an activity to be squeezed into our busy schedules. It becomes an intention that we carry with us throughout the day... Ordinary life becomes missional if we have gospel intentionality. Watching a film with friends or looking after a burdened mother’s children can simultaneously be family time, leisure, [and] mission...”

Total Church, by Tim Chester and Steve Timms

*Every Christian is a missionary. Some go to another place/culture and some stay
What our two missionary families will do in North Africa is not radically different from what
we hope every covenant member of DSC will do every day here in Albuquerque.*

3. The Power for the Mission – “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” --*Every Christian receives Spirit infilling and empowering Luke 12:11-12*

We all feel inadequate. But how shall we respond to our feelings of inadequacy?

a. Address this. Fight it. Read a book on it. Take a class. (Ambassador Class)

Acts--lots of witness but very little cheerleading. “...cannot help but speak of the things which we have heard and seen”--Stoke the fire of your meditation on and enjoyment of Christ and his gospel, and it will pour out...

b. Believe that God will give power. Not a promise for a feeling, but for power. Tim Keller: “...the gospel produces a constellation of traits in us.

- 1) **First**, we are compelled to share the gospel out of generosity and love, not guilt.
- 2) **Second**, we are freed from fear of being ridiculed or hurt by others, since we already have the favor of God by grace.
- 3) **Third**, there is a humility in our dealings with others, because we know we are saved only by grace alone, not because of our superior insight or character.
- 4) **Fourth**, we are hopeful about anyone, even the “hard cases”, because we were saved only because of grace, not because we were likely people to be Christians.
- 5) **Fifth**, we are courteous and careful with people. We don’t have to push or coerce them, for it is only God’s grace that opens hearts, not our eloquence or persistence or even their openness. All these traits not only create a winsome evangelist but an excellent neighbor in a multi-cultural society.”

c. Pray about all this. Paul’s “three Cs”

- 1) Eph 6:19-20 – he asks them to pray that he’d be given more boldness or courage
- 2) Col 4:3 – he asks that they pray for “open doors” to proclaim Christ. (chances)
- 3) Col 4:4 – he asks that they pray that when he gets these open doors, he’d speak clearly. (clarity)

4. The Point of the Mission – redemption, reconciliation, restored worship

- a. The point of the mission is not: winning a cultural war, winning an argument...
- b. The Point of the Mission is: Rescue, Redemption, Reconciliation, Restored worship, restored worshipers, Realization of God’s goodness and glory, nothing less than Jesus “putting things to Right” (NT Wright’s phrase)

5. The Precedent for the Mission – God has already won; he always goes before us; we are joining him in his mission It is **he who changes hearts.**

- 1 Cor 3 – we plant or water, but God must give the increase
- John 3 – he gives new birth. the wind blows where it wishes.
- John 6:44 – he must draw them
- 2 Cor 4:6 – he shines in dark hearts to show them Christ

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Acts 1:1-8

The Great Commission

^{ESV} **Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Discussion 1: What is the Mission?

Read the Great Commission and mark the action verbs. [go, make, baptize, teach]

- *Which of these verbs is usually stressed when this verse is referenced?*

[“Go” usually gets emphasized. Is that how the text is meant?]

Actually, the main verb of the GC is “make” and the central idea of Jesus’ ultimate (and corporate) imperative is to make disciples¹. Go, baptize, and teach are all participles describing those things that precede, follow, or accompany the main action.

[“as you are going, make disciples...” or “when you go...” are possible interpretations. We aren’t discussing this to de-emphasize the importance of global and local missions, but to recognize the great importance of disciple-making.]

- *What is involved in disciple-making? Evangelism only?*

[Pop-evangelicalism tends to scope this down to evangelism only. The problem is compounded when: 1) we then abrogate the responsibility to “the pros”; 2) They do it from a distance (impersonal events like concerts or crusades); and 3) they, unfortunately, often get the gospel wrong (“decisionism” or “ask Jesus into your heart”-ism or “make Jesus your Lord”-ism or any other “gospel” that places the hearer in charge.) Remember--Jesus is Lord, and we are called to do evangelism the way Jesus and his disciples did it: 1) bring knowledge of sin by application of God’s Law/standards of righteousness; 2) faithfully describe (proclaim) God’s provision to save sinners (*substitutionary atonement*); 3) call people to repent and believe in that provision; and 4) stand in awe and give thanks as God saves sinners. *Start recognizing this pattern in the Bible* (and how foreign these other gospels are).]

¹ The same goes for “proclaim” in Mark 16:15 and its surrounding participles.

[Look at the other verbs/participles. We are teaching them all that Jesus commanded, baptizing them, and yes... "going"--spreading the good news. Look at more of the one-anothers of the Bible. Exhort/encourage/correct one another, bear one another's burdens, hold one another accountable, ...]

- *Discuss the importance of "community" in discipleship?*

[The one-anothers simply cannot be done from a distance by a stranger. Real evangelism is also better done in a relationship by people who've earned the right to speak into someone else's life. *That doesn't rule out "to the masses" preaching.*]

Discussion 2: Who, Where, How, and Why this Mission?

Review the sermon points and apply them to these.

- **Who is commissioned?**

[1. The People of the Mission - every disciple]

- **Where?--To whom are we commissioned?**

[2. The Plan for the Mission - "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the utter most parts of the earth"]

- **How is the mission accomplished?**

[3. The Power for the Mission - "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you"]

- Are you feeling inadequate?

[How will you address it? Consider taking the Ambassador class as a CG?]

- Are you praying for the "three Cs" (courage, chances, & clarity)?

[You may be shocked how effective this is.]

- Are you praying for God's Spirit to change hearts?

[When you hear that question, whose hearts are you thinking of? Yes, pray for those who hear the gospel, but how about praying for our apathetic hearts. *Leaders--lead out in confession and repentance here.*]

- **Why is the mission necessary?**

[4. The Point of the Mission - redemption, reconciliation, restored worship]

Discussion 3: Mission Impossible, Mission Accomplished?

This isn't a question about whether the Church has completed her work. Rather, it is more about we should look at the mission before us.

– *Can we do it?*

[No. At least not without God's supernatural intervention and power... but that hasn't kept us from trying!

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 2:14** ***The natural person*** does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he ***is not able*** to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

^{ESV} **John 6:44** ***No one can*** come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

]

– *Room for failure?*

[5. The Precedent for the Mission – God has already won; He always goes before us; we are joining Him in His mission]

– *A source of comfort?*

Jesus has never and will never fail to accomplish His (and therefore the Father's) will. In light of this, read Acts 1:8 again, recognizing and emphasizing the authority and power of Christ's words:

^{ESV} **Acts 1:8** But ***you will receive power*** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and ***you will be my witnesses*** in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

– *Declaring victory and taking comfort in other areas.*

As we are recognizing the absolute authority of Christ and what he says will happen, consider these others. [Go ahead and brag on God. If you don't the rocks may cry out.]

^{ESV} **John 14:3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, ***I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.***

^{ESV} **John 6:44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And ***I will raise him up on the last day.***

Discussion 4: What's Your Mission?

Even after all this study of the importance of community and the corporate nature of our calling and worship, we can still tend to privatize such a question. What is your (*pl.*) mission?

[Your CG is a part of the body of DSC and a part of the Body of Christ. Take some time and consider your mission. Hopefully this is a continuation of last week's "What is your CG mission?" discussion. For most CGs, your own neighborhoods are your primary mission field. For some it will be the church planting mission. For a few CGs the mission could be more demographic than geographic. If you have several members of the board or coaches in a local sports league, you may consider focusing on that community for mission, or several corrections officers from the same or multiple facilities, or theatre performers, directors, and board members, or ... etc. You may have a deacon with an important responsibility that you want to rally around and to serve the Body with excellence and passion. Is there a local ministry that you are passionate about such as CareNet, etc. *Leaders--work with your coach and CG elder if you have something other than local neighborhood in mind. Also keep in mind this isn't just "common interests"... were not looking for "movie watchers" or "golfers" CGs to start up... Is there a community of people you have access to and opportunity to serve and work with? ...*

Leaders: As you do this you will find people with diverse gifts (callings) and there will be some need/opportunity to have members move to groups that share the mission they are gifted to pursue. Are you willing to let go? As CGs spring up much closer to where one of your members lives, are you willing to encourage them to consider going and helping there?]

Local neighborhoods--Most of you don't even know your neighbors right? That is normal in this culture, especially in suburbia. One way to meet your neighbors is by volunteering for your neighborhood watch (NW). The best opportunities are where a NW doesn't even exist yet because the process starts with you knocking on the neighbors' doors to see if they are interested then hosting a kickoff party. Hello neighbors! But you aren't on the same block with your CG members... good! More NWs to work with and conversations like: "Who are these guys who are coming over to help you put on the block party?" --"I'm glad you asked ..." If you do it, do it well as unto the Lord or don't do it. Serve your neighbors well to earn the right to speak into their lives... you might even find that they ask "why are you doing this?" You can find what you need to know about ABQ NW (is there already one on my block? How do I start one?) here²:

<http://www.cabq.gov/police/prevention/neighborhoodwatch.html>

² The ABQ Police Department is not interested in helping you evangelize your neighborhoods, but they are interested in your help serving the community. Your contact with them is about the latter!

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- Why is the mission necessary?

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- *Can we do it?*

- *Room for failure?*

- *A source of comfort? (Acts 1:8, emphasis on Christ's authority)*

- *Declaring victory and taking comfort in other areas. (John 6:44; 14:3)*

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