

9-12-2020

Finding The Mission

Message: Unpacking the Mission

“Who is like the Lord our God? Strong to save! Faithful in love! My debt is paid and the victory won! The Lord is my salvation!”

If that’s what you believe, that God is strong to save, faithful in love and has paid your sin debt, giving you victory in this life and salvation for eternity, then how in the world could you keep that to yourself? Wouldn’t you have a burning desire to let your family and friends know what you had found? And even people you don’t know? Wouldn’t you want them to know? Jesus wants them to know and today we’re going to talk about the mission of the church, where it began, who gave it, and what it is! Let’s pray!

Dear Lord Jesus, You are so precious to me and I want to thank You for coming on Your mission trip many years ago. I know You did that for me and I could never pay You back for the amazing gift You have given me. Forgiveness, hope, peace, eternal life and friendship with Almighty God! How can I say thanks? Maybe the best way for me to show my gratitude is by partnering with You in Your continuing mission to reach the lost souls of this world! Maybe the best way any of us could say thanks is by living lives on mission, just like You when You were here. I pray You will help us discover today how we can be Your missionaries on planet earth and fulfill the mission of the Church! Speak through me this morning as I share Your Word of truth with all who will listen. In Jesus Name I pray and believe! Amen!

1. The Precursor/The Predecessor of the Church’s Mission (Where It Began)

In other words, where does the church’s mission come from? To answer that I want us to go back in time to the events following the death of Jesus. Can you imagine what was going through the minds of those people who had decided to follow Jesus? What now? Jesus had died. He was gone. Some of the folks we heard from last week who were at the cross and many others who had followed Jesus, but weren’t at the scene of the crucifixion, were probably thinking something like this, “So this is how it ends! Man, I really believed

Luke 24:19 ... "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

I can’t believe He’s really gone! I can’t believe it’s over.” And I can imagine one of Jesus’ disciples saying something like this...

“I remember Him telling us once about His mission. It was when we had met Zacchaeus, a tax collector...

Luke 19:9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Another time Jesus told us this...

John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

John 6:39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.

John 6:40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

So we were all kind of thinking the mission of Jesus was clear, to seek and to save what was lost and that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, but we were wondering how can they look upon Jesus now that He's gone. Now that He has died and been buried in a tomb? We figured the mission was over, buried with Jesus. You see..,

Luke 24:21 ...we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

I really thought He was the Messiah who had come to change the world. I mean, we had left everything to follow Jesus. Several of the guys were fishermen and had left their family fishing businesses, boats, nets and all, to follow Jesus. But once Jesus died and was buried, all they could think to do was go back to what they had always known, fishing.

John 21:2 Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

John 21:3 "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you."

But something happened at the end of their fishing trip that changed the very mission of their lives. All of our lives really. They had been fishing all night and caught nothing. Then they see this guy on the beach...

John 21:5 He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered.

John 21:6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

John 21:9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

Okay boys and girls, so glad you're with us today! When the disciples got out of their boat Jesus already had a fire going and had fish already cooking. What does that tell us about Jesus?

He knew how to fish! He was a fisherman!

John 21:10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."

John 21:11 Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.

John 21:12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.

John 21:13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

John 21:14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

John 21:15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

John 21:16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

John 21:17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

So there's the mission all over again. It was about feeding people the spiritual truths of God and letting people know about the One who had come to live a perfect life so he could be the perfect sacrifice in order to save their lives for an eternity."

2. The Progenitor of the Church's Mission (Who Gave It)

A Progenitor is a person or thing from which a person or thing originates!

You can't imagine how important this is when it comes to the mission of the church. Who originated this mission? Who gave us this mission? Who on earth would have the power to convince a group of people to give their lives to fulfill such a mission? The followers of Jesus were going to face persecution like they had never seen before. They would even face death for seeking to carry out their mission. What would fuel their willingness to suffer and die for the mission of Jesus? Before I answer that, let me just say this. We don't have to worry about the same kind of persecution when we tell someone about Jesus, but we may sometimes be picked on or made fun of. Kids sometimes the world likes to make us think we shouldn't share our love for Jesus at work or at school. They try to tell us that religion is a personal thing and we just need to keep quiet. Now we don't want to be obnoxious about sharing our faith, mean spirited, or pushy, and we need to be wise about how we share in this crazy new world we live in, but we can build relationships and friendships with our friends at school and with our co-workers and I can promise you there will be opportunities for you to share what makes your life different. God will open those doors, we just need to walk through them when He does. When I was in college I worked in a maintenance agreement sales department at Sears. One of my coworkers was an atheist, and one was a party girl! The atheist would pick on me and ask hard questions to try and trip me up. I really liked the guy and instead of letting him rattle me I just found common ground, we both loved music. And I would gently try to answer his questions and then move the

conversation to something lighter. When I left the job for another job they gave me a going away party. We had become friends! And the party girl gave me a little plaque that read...

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." Henry David Thoreau

She wrote on the back: Keep marching to your drumbeat, it makes a difference!

Okay, back to the question: What would fuel their willingness to suffer and die for the mission of Jesus? The progenitor of the Mission of The Church was none other than The Risen Savior Jesus Christ! And Jesus had prepared them for their mission.

Luke 24:46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

Luke 24:47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:48 You are witnesses of these things

Witnesses of what things? They were witnesses of the suffering and death of Jesus! They were witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus! But they were also witnesses of the mission and ministry of Jesus! They had seen Him fulfill Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah's mission. Jesus had spoken about it, and the disciples saw Jesus live the mission. Here's where Jesus quoted the Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah's mission, His mission...

Luke 4:16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read,

Luke 4:17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,

Luke 4:19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Luke 4:20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.

Luke 4:21 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus did all of that and let the disciples witness Him doing those things. He mentored them. He let them travel with Him and live with Him for 3 ½ years! After all a disciple is one who follows someone to learn from them. Jesus was discipling the disciples! What was His purpose for teaching them and showing them His mission? He was about to transfer His mission to them, to the church, to the Body of Christ, and those early disciples would be the leaders of the New Testament Church. Sort of the church planters of the New Testament Church! So we've talked about where the mission of the church began and who gave the church its mission. Now let's finish unpacking the mission of the church by looking at the mission specifics Jesus transferred to the Disciples just before He ascended back to heaven.

3. The Specifics of the Mission (What It Is)

Matthew 28:16-20.

Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

Matthew 28:17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Mission Specifics - Our mission has authority!

Jesus was God on mission to our world! He was the Word made flesh! He had said over and over that He and The Father were one. People who heard Him speak were amazed that He spoke as one who had great authority! So Jesus now stands on that authority as He is about to transfer God's mission to His followers!

Based on this authority He then says...

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The word "therefore," means "because." Because I have authority I give you this charge, this instruction, this responsibility, this privilege, this mission!

Mission Specifics - Our Mission is a Lifestyle!

He then says "go and make disciples of all nations!" In the Greek language, this is a participial phrase which literally means, "as you go," or "as you are going!" Why does this matter? Remember in the Christmas story after the Shepherds heard the angels and went to see baby Jesus? After that miraculous night the shepherds returned to their shepherding, but as they did,

they told everyone about what they had seen? The mission of God should be a part of our daily life. It is to be a lifestyle. It is not something we do when we go on a church mission trip. It is something we live every day. We live on mission to share with the world what Jesus has done in our lives and that He will do the same for anyone willing to receive His forgiveness and love!

Mission Specifics - Our Mission is a Verb

So the first verb is not go, but make. As you are going, make disciples! That's the mission of God continued. Jesus had twelve original disciples, but other disciples soon followed, and those disciples made disciples and those disciples made other disciples and so on and so on all the way down to 1974 when I heard the good news and was discipled! All the way down to whatever year you believed and then were discipled. What is a disciple? A disciple is not just a believer in Jesus, but a follower of Jesus! It starts out with belief, faith and placing your trust in Jesus for soul salvation, but that's just the beginning. It continues on a daily basis as you place your faith and trust in Jesus to be Lord of your life, the director of your life, the inspiration for your life, the passion of your life, the mission of your life! A disciple is a person who is a fully committed follower of Christ and who realizes they have been called by God to continue His mission to seek and to save those who are lost! And as people get saved we make disciples!

Mission Specifics - Our Mission has an Initiation!

When you Google the word initiation here's what you'll find...

Initiation - the action of admitting someone into a secret or obscure society or group, typically with a ritual.

Our initiation is not a secret ritual into some obscure club or secret society, but a very public celebration of a person's desire to let the world know "Hey I've decided to follow Jesus and I'm not ashamed of my decision! Nothing secret here, I'll shout it from the mountain tops, and here in Louisiana we have to shout it from on top of a levee! When a person makes a decision to believe, trust, and put their faith in Christ we help them to paint a picture of that new way of life through baptism. Baptism symbolizes the sacrifice Jesus made to bring to us God's forgiveness, cleansing, power, love, and eternal hope! It paints a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus from the grave! Baptism is also a public profession of Jesus to the world, that says: I have decided to follow Jesus. I'm dying to my old selfish and sinful ways and will be living with a new attitude, a new motivation, a new direction! Paul said in Galatians 2:20...

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

And then in Romans 6:4...

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Mission Specifics - Our Mission has Core Values!

We then begin teaching the principles and spiritual truths Jesus taught! His core values! Jesus taught principles for how to live life! I believe if we could get people to just live by the red letters of the Bible the world would become a significantly better place! As you know, in many translations the words Jesus spoke are in red. I was talking to a dear friend many years ago, who at the time was not a believer, and he agreed with me that the world would be much better off if people would live what Jesus taught and lived! Of course some people would say that's not even possible. No one could be that good! What if we took that attitude towards everything in life? Life would come to a screeching halt! Drew Brees is a great quarterback, but he's not perfect, and if he thought he had to be perfect, he would have quit football a long time ago and the Saints would probably still not have a Super Bowl title. Sure, none of us will ever be perfect like Jesus, but what a difference it would make if everybody tried! So what do I tell my really good friend, who is an atheist, who doesn't believe in God and certainly not in Jesus? I tell them, in a Christ loving way, I believe their life could be so much more if they would just give Jesus a chance.

Let me just point you to some red letters. Things we should teach as a part of our mission. Things that would change our world today in an epic way! Things that would not only change lives, but save lives literally. Jesus taught this...

Luke 6:31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 6:32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them.

Luke 6:33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that.

Luke 6:34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full.

Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6:37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

If more Christians lived these verses as they were going about their daily lives, there would be more Christians. Because people would be drawn to the Jesus they could see living in the Christ follower. In fact, the last thing Jesus said to His disciples in this text was...

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:20 (NIV)

No one could live the red letters of Scripture if it weren't for the red letters of this verse. You see no man has the strength on his own to live a completely selfless life. But here's an amazing thing you may not know about this verse. The phrase "I am with you" is almost exactly like the word "Immanuel" which means "God with us!"

Matthew 1:23 “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” —which means, “God with us.”

Zach pointed this out to Andrew and me in our preaching planning meeting last week that Matthew had book-ended his gospel with verses about God being with us! How powerful is that? Very!

One last, but very important observation. Does anyone know what Matthew chapter 28:20 is called by theologians? The Great Commission! The definition of commission is...

Commission - “an instruction, command, or duty given to a person or group of people.”

Jesus let His disciples and us know that God's commission was to continue through us, and then He confirmed that it was a commission when He promised to be with us as we live our lives on mission taking the good news of God's salvation to a lost and dying world! You might be thinking, well that's good pastor, and I agree with you that the church should be reaching people and making disciples. Yes, I think y'all should be doing that! But here's the kicker...Many people think of the church as a building or an institution, or like our really cool graphic, an old Spanish mission out in Texas. But we know the church is the people, the followers of Christ who gather at the building who are the real church!! When you look at our graphic, remember the building is just our mission headquarters, our training site, a place where we gather to worship, to learn, to encourage one another and to disciple one another to live on mission! So that means you are the church, so the great commission is your mission!

I'm going to end our message today with three things that happened in my life this week that illustrate this message and I believe were God-ordained!

I was on my way into the church building the other day. I had stopped to take a picture of a helicopter flying overhead. When I lowered the camera there was a guy standing beside me. I've met him before. A really nice guy, a believer. He loves to talk theology and always wants to straighten out my theology! He said the church's only job is the sanctification of the Saints and

not to reach the lost. He said that's the church's only mission! He believed that those who are going to be saved have already been picked by God and those who are not going to be saved were simply not picked by God to be saved. I disagreed with him, but he continued. He said the job of the church is not to evangelize or share the gospel, but to take care of the saints. Well here's what I've got to say to that: The definition of Sanctification according to Holman Bible Dictionary is...

Sanctification - "The process of being made holy resulting in a changed life-style for the believer"

The best way for a follower of Christ to be made holy resulting in a changed life-style is by becoming more like Jesus! And if you become more like Jesus you will be motivated by the things that motivated Jesus. Let me remind you what motivated Jesus...

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

And that's the mission of the church. Jesus said it was the mission of the church! You just can't get around that! A lot of people would like to not have to have the responsibility of worrying about all those lost people out there! How convenient! Paul said this...

Romans 10:12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Romans 10:14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Romans 10:15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

On Tuesday I received a call from Bethel Colony in New Orleans East. It was from Pastor Mel Jones, the director of this amazing ministry to folks who struggle with addiction. He told me he had someone who wanted to talk to me. It was a guy I had met at the Picayune Scrap Yard. I had some scrap metal in a covered trailer that had been in there for a couple of years. Six months ago I finally decided it was time to get rid of that scrap. Boy was it time, God's time. As I was standing in the little office waiting to collect my whopping 32 dollars, a man walked in. He was angry and upset. I started a conversation with him. We ended up in the parking lot talking about Jesus. This towering man began to weep. He began to talk about how he couldn't believe someone would care enough to reach out to him. We prayed together and he cried out to the Lord. He bear hugged me. I told him about Bethel and he agreed to let me take him there. A week later we were on our way there. Tuesday he asked me if I would come to New Orleans this coming Saturday to give him his graduation certificate. And then he told me he's going to stay at

the mission for another six months to volunteer his time on staff there helping others! He's found Jesus and now has a mission in life.

The next night, Wednesday, at 1:03 am, my phone rang. Being a pastor and a fire chaplain, that's usually not a good thing! It was a young man who used to be in our church. He asked me what I was doing and I told him I was sleeping. I don't sleep much, and go to bed late and get up early, but at 1:03 am, I'm usually asleep. However, if you need me, call me! My phone sleeps right beside me on the night stand. He had struggled with addiction as a teenager.. He told me he had been trying to get up the courage to call me for several weeks and thought, well he's probably not busy now, maybe just sleeping so I'll call him. I'm glad he did. He told me he had finally decided to accept Jesus into his life! He was fired up for Jesus! He's at a recovery center in Lake Charles. He talked about how our church had meant so much to him, and how God had used us in his life to help him get where he is now! He remembered us reaching out to him when he was in the hospital even though he wasn't active in church. He said he's got a good job and is living in the halfway house now and is on a mission to live for Jesus and grow in his walk with God. He's been asked to lead one of their groups in morning devotions. The details are a little foggy to me. We talked for 38 minutes. I told him about our website and how he could get the messages. He was super excited. I told him about my old Christian rock albums and how he could download them or live stream them for free at my website. He was excited and said, "I just pulled up the site, I'm going to go to sleep listening to them tonight!" We prayed together and are looking forward to fellowshiping sometime soon!

The Purpose of Northshore Church is...

To see the One who gave His life for us exalted and the ones He gave His life for transformed!

The Mission of Northshore Church is...

Transforming worship, people and the world.

We do that by making disciples!!

The Vision of Northshore Church is....

To raise up a healthy church that will impact the north shore and ultimately the world with the life changing message of Jesus Christ!

Let's pray!

