



JOURNEY BASICS: SENT!

SENT! THE CHURCH AS THE MISSION AND PEOPLE OF GOD

DEFEATER BELIEF

“My religion is my own affair! Mind your own business and leave me to mind my own! You’re just an evangelical terrorist!”

Millions of people in today’s world are extremely hostile to the Christian missionary enterprise. They regard it as politically disruptive (because it loosens the cement that binds national culture) and religiously narrow minded (because it makes exclusive claims for Jesus), while those involved in proclaiming the Gospel to other nations are looked upon as arrogant imperialists. And any attempt to ‘convert’ people to Christ is rejected as an unpardonable intrusion on their private lives.

A brief response

It is essential, therefore, to understand the grounds on which the Christian mission rests. Only then will we be able to persevere in the face of opposition. We need Biblical incentives! For we believe the Bible to be the revelation of God and His will. So we ask: Has he revealed in Scripture that “mission” is His will for His people the church? The answer is yes. Through scripture, God has revealed His missionary purpose for the church. For us personally then, living missional lives is a matter of obedience to what God has purposed, no matter what others might think or say about us.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE REVEAL ABOUT GOD’S PLAN?

The God of the Bible is a Missional God. God is on mission. He has been on mission throughout history to accomplish His purpose throughout the Earth. Each time we see God in the Bible, He is acting in accordance with His purpose: *to reveal Himself in order that His name would be glorified, that His kingdom would be established and that some from every people would be reconciled to Himself.* God is on Mission in order that: *His name is glorified, His Kingdom is established, and the world is reconciled to Himself!*

God’s redemptive plan is revealed throughout Scripture.

God has revealed Himself, His purpose and His ways, involving the church as He invites all the world’s peoples to know and worship Him. You see the whole Bible is a Missionary book. Although the Old Testament is the Word of God primarily to Israel, its value does not lie only in the way it anticipates the New Testament’s announcement of the Messiah of Israel and the savior of the world (see Isaiah 49:6 and Zechariah 9:9). It is in fact revelation in the same sense as the New Testament, for it reveals the mighty acts and gracious purpose of God on behalf of His people and the world he created for them. On this basis we can say with confidence that the central theme of both the Old and New Testaments is the revelation of the redemptive activity of God in and through His Son Jesus. In the Bible, God reveals His missional purposes:

- **Through Abraham**, God revealed Himself as the LORD, the Almighty and the Provider, who will bless *all the peoples of the earth* through Abraham’s offspring- the people of God. **Read Genesis 12: 1-4.** This passage of scripture is known as *The Abrahamic Covenant*. An understanding of this promise of God to Abraham is indispensable to an understanding of the Bible and of the Christian mission. These are perhaps the most unifying verses in the Bible: the whole of God’s purpose is encapsulated here. God chose one man and His family in order, through them, to bless all the families of the earth. In fact, this promise is being fulfilled today as people from all over the world are being saved through the proclamation of the Gospel. **Read Galatians 4:8.** The Apostle Paul looks back at God’s promise to Abraham and calls it the Gospel! This promise then is God’s stated purpose throughout the entire Bible to reconcile people from every tongue, tribe, and nation.
- **Through Moses**, God revealed Himself as the I AM THAT I AM, whose plan is to show His glory to the world through His people, who are to be a kingdom of priests to all nations. The covenant people of Israel were given the law to live amidst pagan nations in a manner that would be reflective of the True and Living God. Their lifestyle and devotion was meant to serve God and attract the people around them into the same relationship they enjoyed with Yahweh.
- **Through David**, God revealed that His Seed would rule all nations and His Kingdom would be for all peoples. **Read 2 Samuel 7:8-16.** This passage of scripture known as *the Davidic Covenant* amplifies the seed aspect, which was detailed in *the Abrahamic Covenant*. The promises to David in this passage are very significant. God promised that David’s physical line of descent would last forever and that His kingdom would never pass away permanently (verse 16). This kingdom, furthermore, would have a ruling individual exercising authority over it (verse 16). Obviously, the Davidic throne has not been in place at all times. There will be a time, however, when someone from the line of David will again sit on the throne and rule as king. This future king is Jesus.
- **Through Jesus**, God revealed His love and His purpose to reconcile the world to Himself through Christ’s incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension into heaven. **Read John 3:17.**

Journal: As Christians we believe in the Second Coming of Christ. We know that Jesus came the first time in grace to save the world, so how does His

Second Coming differ (see 2 Timothy 4:1)? How should the truth of the Second Coming affect how we view the importance of missions?

- **Through Paul**, God revealed that the mystery of the ages is that He includes *all peoples* (not just Israel) in His redemptive plan. **Read in sequence Ephesians 1:9; 3:3,4,6,9; 5:32**, 'The Mystery' of God's plan to redeem people from every nation. **Conclude by reading 6:19** and pray that our church will also boldly proclaim this *mystery* of the Gospel!
- **Through John**, God revealed that some from every nation, tribe, tongue and people will worship around the throne of God forever! **Read Revelation 7:9-10**.

God is at work all the time, to the very end of time, bringing about this revelation, for all peoples' reconciliation. When this mission is fulfilled, it will not only be the fullest expression of earth's praise, it will be the fullest revelation of God's love (see John 1:11-13).

God sends you and me to accomplish His purposes. God is sovereign. He has initiated every part of His work throughout History. Instead of carrying out His mission on His own, God chooses to accomplish His mission in a very personal way. God comes to His people and reveals His plans for His Kingdom, inviting us to join Him on mission. The prophet Amos indicated that, "The Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

- When God was ready to judge the world He came to Noah.
- When God was ready to set apart a people unto Himself he came to Abraham to accomplish His will through him.
- When God heard the cry of His people Israel and decided to deliver them, He came to Moses who would lead them out from under the heel of Pharaoh.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God worked the same way as He did with Moses, inviting His people to be on mission with Him. His ways are the same today. God is inviting us to join Him on His global mission to reconcile the world to Himself.

Is the term Mission a Biblical term?

It is true that the word "mission" or "missions" is not found in the Bible. The word "missionary" is not found in the Bible either. Even though these words are not found in the Bible we need to understand what they mean. The term MISSION (frequently spoken of as the *mission of the church*) refers to the mandate given by Christ known as the GREAT COMMISSION found in Matthew 28:19. Christ has commanded every one of His followers to *go* and make disciples of all nations (or people groups). The term MISSIONS refers to the evangelistic work of local churches to declare the gospel throughout their communities, nation, and the world. It is important to understand that the work of evangelism is holistic, in that the spoken word can and should be accompanied by acts of mercy and compassion (ministering to physical and spiritual needs of a person).

CAUTION: Though acts of compassion point to the heart of the Gospel, they must not take the place of sharing the Gospel message with people because they are reconciled to God by hearing the Gospel and believing in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

"MISSIONARIES, or *sent ones*, are people sent by God to proclaim the Good News of Kingdom. Although the Bible does not use the word "missions" or "missionary," it does have much to say about God SENDING people into the world.

- **Read John 17:18**—"As You (The Father) _____ Me (Jesus Christ) into the world, so I (Jesus Christ) have _____ them (His believers) into the world".

JOURNAL: Too often we think that mission of the church is accomplished by "missionaries", not by people like you and me. This couldn't be further from the truth! Do you view yourself as a missionary (sent one) to live and proclaim the Gospel? Why or why not.

Am I called on Mission with God?

God wants us to be on mission with Him as Jesus was on mission with the Father. God wants us to be like Jesus, who always obeyed Him. Jesus indicated through His life that He was joining the Father in His mission. He announced that *He had come not to do His own will, but the will of the Father who had sent Him* (John 4:34).

Jesus Christ was sent into the world on a mission. God gave His son an assignment, and Christ carried out this assignment perfectly (see John 17:4) In the same way, Jesus Christ has sent His believers into the world on a mission. Let us briefly think about the mission and the assignment that our Savior has given to us:

1. Where has God sent us (**Read Mark 16:15**)? _____
2. What has He sent us with? What kind of message has God given us? **Read 1 Thessalonians 2:4**—"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the _____."
3. **Read Mark 16:15 again.** God wants this message to go to every _____.

The Father loved the Son, and took the initiative to come to Him and reveal what He (the Father) was doing, or was about to do. Jesus kept looking for the Father's activity around Him, so that He could unite His life with the Father's on mission.

JOURNAL: Do you agree that every Christian is being sent “on mission” by Jesus (John 20:21)? If so, in what way do you need to be taught and trained to be ready to serve on mission?

Knowing and working in God’s ways

Even the casual reader of the Bible can see that God’s ways and plans are so different from the ways that we accomplish our goals. God said, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways” (Isaiah 55:8). With God on His mission, we must look to follow Kingdom principles to accomplish Kingdom purposes. Learning to follow God’s ways may be more important than making sincere attempts to do His will. God wants to complete His work through you. He can only do that as you adjust your life to Him and to His ways. God has involved His people on mission with Him in the same ways all through History:

God is always at work around you to accomplish His mission	Expect God to encounter you to reveal what He is doing near you or among distant peoples to reconcile a lost world to Himself.
God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal	Respond to God as He invites you into a covenant relationship of promise and obedience. God wants to deepen His love relationship with you far more than He wants merely to utilize you for a task.
God invites you to become involved in His work when He reveals Himself and His work to you	Respond when God calls you to Himself to be on mission with Him.
God speaks to you by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and your church, to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways	Respond as God prepares you for His mission through various means.
God’s invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.	Obeys as God sends you where He can best work through you to accomplish His mission.
You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.	Expect God to empower you as you make the life changes that open you to co-labor with God according to His ways.
You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.	Expect God to guide you on His mission to reveal Himself and to reconcile a lost world to Himself

So how can we know God’s missional will for our lives? Since all true mission is really *God on His Mission*, there is not a different mission for us. He has never been willing that any should perish. God’s mission is to glorify His name, to establish His kingdom and to reconcile the world to Himself. Within this immense global purpose, God does not leave us to guess His will. As you come to know Him better He will reveal His will in a clearer way.

- **On mission with God, you will experience that God is love.** His will is always best. He pursues a love relationship with you so you can join Him in His mission;
- **On mission with God, you will experience the God is all knowing.** His directions are always right. He reveals them when you are obedient to Him.
- **On mission with God, you will experience that God is all-powerful.** He enables you to accomplish His will when you are totally dependent on Him.

JOURNAL: Where do you see the Father’s activity around you? Where in the world can you join the Father in His mission of proclaiming the Good News?

For His Name’s Sake

‘Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.*” (Matthew 19:27-30)

Ultimately, what is our motivation for following Christ in mission? Is it ultimately about feeding the hungry, rescuing the orphan, or caring for the sick? Is it about how many ‘souls’ we can win? Ultimately our motivation to take risks, leave home and family, and involve ourselves in the mission of the church is for the sake of the name of Jesus. That means for the sake of Jesus’ reputation. God’s goal is that His Son’s name be exalted and honored among all the peoples of the world. For when the Son is honored, the Father is honored (Mark 9:37). When every knee bows at the name of Jesus, it will be “to the glory of the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11). Therefore missions and our involvement exist for the sake of the name of Jesus!

THE BIG IDEAS

- God is a missional God on mission. He invites His church to co-labor with Him in the task of proclaiming the Gospel to all the peoples of the world.
- God's Great Commission, or mandate, to every Christ follower is to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19).
- As a follower of Christ, you are a sent one by God. A missionary with a purpose and the message of the Good News of the Kingdom!

Special Terms

Mission Refers to the mandate given by Christ (see Matthew 28:19) to every one of His followers to go and make disciples of all nations (or people groups).

Missions The evangelistic work of local churches to declare the gospel throughout their communities, nation, and the world.

Missionary Means 'sent ones' and refers to the individual believers who make up the church, sent to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.

Additional Study

Further Study: Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem; Let the Nations be Glad by John Piper

Advanced Study: Announcing the Kingdom by Arthur Glasser; Perspectives on World Christian Movement by Ralph Winters & Steven Hawthorne

Sources: The Living God is a Missionary God, John R. Stott; On Mission with God, Blackaby & Willis; Systematic Theology, W. Grudem.

JOURNEY BASICS: SENT!

History is HIS STORY!

God's Story comes to us as a redemptive drama in four parts:

- A) _____—when everything was as God meant it to be.
- B) _____—the tragic intrusion of sin and death, resulting in the pervasive brokenness of all people and everything God has made.
 - 1. (Genesis 3:15) God _____ a way out: the _____!
- C) _____—God's astonishing promise to redeem his fallen image-bearers and creation through the grace-full work of his Son, Jesus Christ.
 - 2. (Genesis 12:1-3) God _____ to bless the _____!
 - a. The blessing _____ with _____
 - b. Is _____ in the Kingly reign of _____
 - c. Is _____ in life, death, and resurrection of _____
- D) _____ the magnificent fulfillment of God's plan to gather and cherish a people forever, and to live with them in a more-than-restored world, called "the new heaven and new earth."
 - 1. _____ is the consummation of history: an eternity in _____ or _____

What is God's purpose?

God's purpose is _____ with _____ distinct directions:

- 1) _____. God desires that will come to Him from every nation. Therefore world evangelization is ultimately for God.
- 2) _____. God intends to be a redemptive blessing to every people. He will redeem a people from every people.
- 3) _____. God will overcome evil powers in order to liberate people and, ultimately, to bring all things under His everlasting and complete governance. This Kingdom reign is the substance of the blessing He brings to the nations.

The Church as the mission and people of God

- E) We are the _____ of God's promise to Abraham
- F) Like Abraham, we are _____ to be a _____ to the nations
We accomplish this by fulfilling the _____