



more evident than in the person and work of Jesus Christ on earth. By looking at the life of Christ, we develop a picture of the attitude, work of ministry, and dependence upon Jesus that is necessary for us to successfully join Jesus in His mission. This course (REL 202) will look at the relevance of Jesus with respect to the missional living into which God is inviting us to center our lives.

## **JESUS GOES TO THE EARTH**

As we consider missional living for ourselves, our example and motivation must come from Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:5-11 highlights the attitude necessary for missional living by looking at the posture of Jesus.

**<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.**

One of the first things we see necessary to engage the mission of God is a posture of sacrifice and humility. From these verses, we learn that Jesus, the Son of God, is of the same value as the Father. And although this was and is true, Jesus did not consider his own comfort and position in heaven, the home of the God-kind, something of which to keep a hold. He sacrificed these in order to go to the earth.

On earth, Jesus did not take the position of a King, but that of a servant. This required a posture of humility. Humility is not a feeling, but an intentional decision to come under the Father's authority and plan. This happened because Jesus believed that the Father is good and, therefore, the Father's plan is good. So, he emptied himself of all that rightfully belonged to Him so that He could come to the earth to put on display the love and truth of the Father. This posture of humility is foundational to living on mission.

This posture of sacrifice and humility was not without a certain motivation. Jesus knew that the plan had challenges for himself. He knew it would involve persecution and eventual physical death and spiritual separation from the Father. But, he also knew it would result in his resurrection from the dead (Matt 17:22), his own reuniting and glorification with the Father (John 17:5), the releasing of the Spirit into believers (John 14:16-17), and the ability to be with His followers for eternity (John 14:1-3). The author of Hebrews defines all of this as the “joy that was set before Jesus” that motivated him to “endure the cross” and “despise its shame.”

Several places throughout the New Testament communicate reward for those believers who remain faithful at living in the mission of God. This reward includes some of the very same things that it did for Jesus: our resurrection from the dead, our reuniting with Jesus face to face, our co-reigning with Jesus in eternity. This future joy set before us is to be the motivation for us to take on Jesus’ posture of sacrifice and humility as we pursue living on mission with Jesus.

### **JESUS ENGAGES THE FATHER’S MISSION**

At the onset of Jesus entering the mission of the Father, Satan attempted to interrupt the plan by tempting Jesus with several different other “missions” that Jesus could live. Matthew 4:1-11 depicts three offers that Satan gave to Jesus. One included Jesus using his own authority to take care of his own personal needs because “the Father couldn’t be trusted” to do so. Another included “coercing the Father into action” by testing the Father’s love for the Son instead of embracing the Father’s love by faith.

The third offer involved Jesus “short-circuiting the Father’s plan” for Jesus to rule the world. Satan would give the world to Jesus for one little bow of the knee to Satan, a.k.a., for Jesus to come under Satan’s authority. Thankfully, in all of these, Jesus relied on the authority of God’s Word, spoke truth to Satan, and, by faith, chose

to align with His Father because he believed the Father is good and that the Father's plan, although challenging, was *better in the long run* than Satan's plan.

We must beware; Satan continues to work his deception toward believers, and especially toward those who want to live on mission for God (1 Peter 5:8). As with Jesus, Satan will wait until we are in a vulnerable position (usually suffering of some kind) and then dangle a carrot in front of us in hopes that we will take his offer and step out of the mission of God. His continuous goal is to interrupt the plan of God in our lives in any way possible.

Jesus did not pursue the mission of God alone. The mission of God involves both putting the Father's love on display toward others, and, spending intentional time investing into the lives of those who are open and willing. We see this in Jesus' ministry in Matthew 4:12-25 and Matthew 5-7. Right after the temptations of Jesus, He went out to begin telling people about God and demonstrating what the Father was like through the way He loved people. This attracted a good many people.

As Jesus spent time with people, He called a few to give up their livelihoods and to begin to follow him more intentionally. He set out a vision for Peter and Andrew in Matthew 4:19, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Then, He took them along with Him and they began learning from him the posture and sacrifice necessary to engage in the mission of God. He also taught them, along with all the people, about their posture. He taught them about himself. He taught them about the human condition and how it manifests itself. He taught them about meeting the needs of others and about prayer and fasting. He taught them about rewards. He taught them about the goodness of the Father and relying on the Father. He was demonstrating by His words and his actions what it looks like to build on a solid foundation a functional belief system of *how life works*.

## **JESUS NARROWS THE MISSIONAL FOCUS**

As Jesus continued spending time with people, He also knew that He wouldn't be around for too long into the future. So, we see in Matthew 10:1-42, Jesus choosing 12 men with whom He would spend extra time equipping to carry on His ministry when He left. He called them his Apostles, meaning the messengers who would take out to others the message of Jesus.

As part of their preparation, Jesus paired them up and sent them out while He was still on earth. Prior to sending them out, He gave them specific instructions, warnings, encouragements, and motivations to continue with the mission. These motivations contained having an eternal perspective on reward.

When they returned, Jesus reviewed with them their experience and gave more instructions to them. He began to spend dedicated time with them, even instructing them what certain parables meant so they could be prepared to take the mission of God out after Jesus' departure. We notice that within the twelve, Jesus even narrowed his focus down to three at times (Peter, James, and John) in order to better equip them as top leaders after he left (Matthew 17:1-13).

## **JESUS ENCOUNTERS CHALLENGES IN THE MISSION**

Living in the mission of God will involve coming face to face with many relational challenges. Quite honestly, some of those relational challenges will result from our own fallings short of God's relational glory. Many of the relational challenges will come from others who either intentionally or unintentionally cause relational hurt as they are journeying toward a deeper relationship with Jesus. In fact, we Jesus encountering many challenges as He engaged with God's mission.

Matthew 15:1-9 depicts Jesus engaging with the religious leaders of His day. We believe Jesus cared for their spirituality and future as much as that of anyone else. Jesus takes the time to rebuke their

thinking and offer truth in hopes that some would embrace Him as the Messiah.

At times, living in the mission requires rebuking others for their benefit because they are off base in their thinking and consequently their actions. This rebuke is to be done in love for the benefit of the other. Our hopes would be that others would listen, repent, and begin pursuing Jesus with deep desire and passion. This may happen, especially for those who are sensitive to the Spirit's work in their inner being. But, we can also expect that some will dig in their heels, reject us, make plans to turn others against us, and/or walk away from our relationship with them altogether. The religious leaders responded to Jesus mostly in this way, although some among them began to secretly follow Jesus.

There will also be times that those with whom you have a close relationship may turn against you and walk away from the relationship. We see this occurring in the relationships Jesus had with Peter, Judas, and all the apostles in Matthew 26:36-75. They had served with, been equipped by, and loved by Jesus for three solid years. Yet, when it came down to enduring some potential persecution because of their association with Jesus, they betrayed and deserted Him.

Although we can expect this from time to time, it does hurt and provide a sense of confusion. On the other hand, it gives us an opportunity to grow in our dependence on God's Spirit to provide what is necessary to continue to love in spite of the hurt, confusion, and the potential for more of the same in the future. As we continue loving well, it provides fertile ground for potential restoring of relationships at a later time.

### **THE MISSION INVOLVES RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS**

As Paul asserts in 2 Corinthians 5, believers have been given the ministry of reconciliation. We understand this on two levels. There

is the reconciliation to God that all people need to have and learn to live in the reality of that reconciliation. Then also, there is the reconciliation that occurs between people. As mentioned earlier, living in the mission of God will provide opportunity for relational challenges with others that may result in betrayal, hurt, and confusion. As we press into Jesus for wisdom and strength to love well, we may be given opportunity to reconcile some of those relationships.

This is precisely what we see between Jesus and Peter in John 21:15-19. Although Peter deserted Jesus and denied ever knowing Jesus (three different times), Jesus did not hold that against Peter, recognizing that Peter was in process of growing and that this was part of what the Father was doing to help Peter grow. It didn't minimize the relational hurt that Jesus may have felt, but it gave Jesus a bigger purpose for which to continue loving Peter. Restoring the relationship with Peter set Peter up for being able to continue growing and to eventually lead the Jerusalem Church well into the mission of God.

### **ENTERING THE MISSION THROUGH SUBMISSION TO JESUS**

After the resurrection of Jesus and before He ascended back into heaven, Jesus made a declaration to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20.

**18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

Jesus had demonstrated the lifestyle of making disciples with His disciples. Since He was preparing to leave, He was now calling them to this same lifestyle. Jesus begins by saying, "All authority in

heaven and on earth has been given to me.” The implication of this statement is that this, “If the disciples were not to engage in this same kind of living as Jesus had demonstrated the previous three years, they would have come under and submit to Jesus and his plan for making disciples.”

Jesus was not calling them to something that was impossible for them to do. Jesus was not calling them to something that He didn't model. Jesus was not calling them to something for which He didn't prepare them. And Jesus gave to them a promise that He would be with them always to the very end. Each disciple, had to make the personal choice to trust Jesus and to follow His plan. They knew by Jesus' example and by Jesus' teaching that this lifestyle would not be easy. It would require sacrifice. It would require serving others. It would result in a spiritual bullseye being placed on their backs toward which Satan would aim his flaming arrows.

The same is true for you. As you consider stepping into Jesus' mission in the area of MC leadership, you must also make a personal choice to trust Jesus and to follow His plan. This lifestyle will not be easy. It requires sacrifice. It requires serving others' needs over your own. It will result in a spiritual bullseye being placed on *your* back toward which Satan will aim his flaming arrows. You will get hurt by people closest to you.

You may be betrayed by God's Family members. They may leave you in a state of hurt and confusion. This all provides great opportunity for you to press deeper into Jesus, trusting Him to provide to you what is necessary to continue putting His love on display, even in those difficult relationships. This can result in opportunities to restore some of those relationships and to continue investing into them for the eternity's sake!

As you remain faithful in the mission of making disciples, you also will grow, you will be storing up treasure for yourself in Heaven, and others' lives will be impacted for eternity. And just their lives,



but all those they too will invest into because of your faithfulness. And so, you can have a generational legacy impact on the world that lasts well beyond your lifetime! In all of that, Jesus will be lifted up and made much of!

## JESUS EMPOWERS THE MISSION

*Matthew 16:13-18; 28:18; Acts 1:8*

As we look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:18, we understand that Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on Earth. The purpose of this power is to work in and through individuals in the Church in order to build the Church. We conclude this from Matthew 16:13-18,

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus is indicating that He will build His church upon the One that Peter just testified, “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” In 1 Peter 2:7-8, Peter refers to this *rock* when he writes, “<sup>7</sup> So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The *stone* that the builders rejected has become the *cornerstone*,” <sup>8</sup> and “A *stone* of stumbling, and a **rock** of offense.”

This power and authority Jesus that has been given to build the Church was earned through His willingness to go to the cross on behalf of humanity. Hebrews 2:9 states, "...we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely *Jesus*, **crowned** with glory and honor *because* of the suffering of death..." *Crowned* here indicates that authority has been given to Him. The reason Jesus was crowned with this authority was "because of the suffering of death."

Philippians 2:8-9 communicates this same idea, "<sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> *Therefore* God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name..." Again, we see Jesus receiving authority because of his obedience to the point of death.

Jesus received this authority at His resurrection from the dead according to Romans 1:4-5, "[He] was declared to be the Son of God in *power* according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord..." So, we refer to this special bestowing of power and authority as his *Resurrection Power*. This resurrection power was given for the purpose of building the Church through the Church and will come to an end according to 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. The pronouns in the quote below have been clarified to understand the flow of events.

<sup>24</sup> **Then comes the end, when [Jesus, the Son of God] delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For [the Son] must reign *until* he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death.**

<sup>27</sup> For "God has put all things in subjection under [the Son's] feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that [the Father] is excepted who put all things in subjection under [the Son]. <sup>28</sup> When all things

are subjected to [the Son], **then** the Son himself will also be subjected to [the Father] who put all things in subjection under [the Son], that God may be all in all.

Jesus' *resurrection authority* exists for the purpose of Jesus building the Church (the Family of God). This authority is given until Jesus destroys all of his enemies. After this destruction of his enemies occurs, Jesus will then come under the authority of the Father that the Father might be glorified by and through all things!

Believing Jesus has the authority over all things is critical for stepping into the battlefield for people's souls. As believers in Jesus, we have access to His power and authority for winning the souls of people to Him, both for unbelievers who need to believe in Him and for believers who are struggling to live for Him. As leaders and disciplinarians, you will become tired and worn down. Satan will continue his attacks against you. Remembering that Jesus has the authority, even though many times it will be difficult to feel this, is important for pressing forward for the benefit of others and the glory of God.

Jesus has asked and the Father has granted His Spirit to all who believe in the finished work of Christ on the cross. From Acts 1:8, we understand the Spirit to be the giver of Jesus' power to those who are engaged in the work and goal of His mission to build His Church through the process of making disciples.

## JESUS REDEFINES THE MISSION

*Matthew 28:18-20; Genesis 1:28; John 13:34-35; 17:21-24*

### REVIEW OF THE MISSION

God's *goal* of having the earth filled with His image bearers who would put on display His love in the ways they relate to one other was to originally occur through the *work* of multiplying and ruling

over the earth as His image bearers depended on Him for strength and wisdom.

In the course INT 200, we learned that the Fall did not change the *goal* of God's mission, but it did dramatically alter the *work* of how to accomplish this goal. After the Fall, people would need to be rescued from Satan's domain and into God's Family. Afterwards, they would need to experience the slow transforming process of learning how to live consistently in this new Family.

### **ISRAEL AND THE MISSION**

In Exodus 19:5-6, God declared to the nation of Israel through Moses, "5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel." The nation of Israel was to be a beacon through whom the peoples of the earth would see and experience the love of God and be drawn to Him. We refer to this as the *come and see* posture. By and large Israel failed in this work of the mission.

### **JESUS AND THE MISSION - GO**

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus redefined the *work* of the mission from a *come and see* posture to a *go and be* posture when He said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." Jesus' command was not without his own example. Paul points this out later in Philippians 2:5-6 when he penned the words, "5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." Jesus demonstrated the *go and be* posture by leaving the comfort and position of His home in Heaven and coming to Earth, incarnating as a servant in the form of human being. In a sense, He went to a *foreign* soil and became like the *foreigner* so He could speak and live the Truth of God's

Word in the context of the *foreigner*. He was the ambassador in a foreign land (the earth vs. heaven) for his Father.

**JESUS AND THE MISSION - BAPTIZING**

Jesus then gives a bit of instruction on what must complement the “going” so that disciples can be made: baptizing and teaching. These components are also part of the work of the mission. *Baptizing* as we understand it from the original language also means *immersing into*. When we read the commission with the phrase *immersing into*, it takes on a little different understanding, “immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The phrase “name of” indicates all that embodies the nature and character and will of a person.<sup>1</sup>

We believe this statement carries much more meaning than speaking the phrase, “I now baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” while the new believer is being immersed into water. Recall the relational dynamic that exists within the Trinity where love is transacting back and forth between the Father and the Son through the Spirit for the benefit of one another other. Part of discipling includes immersing others into this kind of relational dynamic as it is occurring among God’s Family through God’s Spirit as God’s people are relating deeply to one another. According to John 17:20-21, for unbelievers, this becomes a convincing evidence of the reality of Jesus. For believers, it becomes the ethos through which the nature and character of Christ is built up within each other as the truth is being shared in this environment.

**JESUS AND THE MISSION - TEACHING**

The third component of making disciples defined by Jesus is *teaching*. Jesus qualifies this teaching as “all that I have commanded you.” So, in the ethos of God’s love transacting back and forth between God’s people through His Spirit, teaching the

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<sup>1</sup> When a representative says, “I come in the name of the King,” it’s understood that that person is representing the nature and character and will of the King.

truth of God's Word has a rich environment in which to take hold in the minds and hearts of God's Family members.

From Ephesians 4:7-16, this *teaching* that Jesus refers to in the great commission comes through the speaking gifts that He gives to the Church in the form of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers. These gifted people are used by Jesus to build these values into the life of individuals within the Church so that more and more the Church is able to operate in these as believers become equipped to speak the truth (provided through these speaking gifts) to one another in the context of loving relationships. According to verse 16, as this occurs, disciples are made as the Church builds itself up in love characterized by humility, gentleness, and patience.<sup>2</sup>

The need for teaching becomes evident as we consider the natural state of our minds. From birth onward, we have a corrupt flesh that is determined to make life work without God. To help with this, Satan has developed a world system that appeals to our flesh to lure us away from God in multiple ways. Through experiences in this world system from very early on we develop a functional belief system of how to make the world work for *me*. We test out our belief system to validate it or modify it as we continue engaging the world. For most people, by the time they hear the gospel and embrace Jesus, they have a very robust belief system of how to make life work *without the assistance of God*.

As MC leaders, our task is to disciple into maturity those entrusted to our care. This means that the values of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher are being built into the functional belief system of each believer in Jesus. The work of discipling believers into maturity requires exposing the fallacies in their functional belief system and to help people replace those lies with the Truth from God's Word that they are learning. It also

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<sup>2</sup> For more details of this, see the CT's for Ephesians 4:7-16 from August 23 and 30, 2020.

requires helping people learn how to make decisions by faith based on this new body of Truth they are learning and embracing so that their operating belief system begins to more and more mirror the operating belief system of Jesus.

For Hope Community Church, we believe this occurs best through MC leaders taking the Truth that is being proclaimed at the Central Teachings and ensuring MC members understand the meaning of this Truth and how to incorporate this truth into their functional belief system so they can more and more make real life decisions based on this Truth by faith.

## JESUS OVERSEES THE MISSION

*Matthew 28:20; John 14:1-26; Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 3:6; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21*

Jesus concludes his command to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” with “and behold I am with you always to the end of the age.” Obviously, Jesus was taken up into heaven and is not on the planet any longer. So, in what way would Jesus be with his apostles? John 14 answer this. In verse 26, Jesus says, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom *the Father will send in my name*, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” Jesus would be with his apostles through the Holy Spirit that the Father would send to them *in Jesus’ name*.

Recall previously, *in Jesus’ name* means *in the nature and character and will of Jesus*. So, the Holy Spirit would bring the very nature and character and will of Jesus into the apostles so that they could be witnesses of Jesus as they embarked on the mission to make disciples of all nations. Jesus would be with them through His Spirit.

When Jesus said, "I will be with you to the end of the age," we believe this *age* is referring to the age in which Jesus is building his Church, the Church Age. Since this *age* is still in tact, we must conclude that Jesus is still with all his believers through the Holy Spirit who dwells within each believer bringing the nature and character and will of Jesus to each believer in their inner being for the purpose of making disciples of all nations.

From Acts 1:8, we learn that Jesus empowers his mission through His Spirit that dwells within each believer. We also believe that the Holy Spirit does not override the will of the person. The Holy Spirit will teach, remind, and give direction, but it is up to each individual believer to listen to the Spirit's leading and then by faith choose to move accordingly. Jesus oversees the building of His Church through the Spirit that exists in each believer. Jesus empowers the building of His Church through the Spirit that exists in each believer. And then, Jesus does the work of building His Church through each believer who by faith chooses to follow the leading of the Spirit. As we learned in MET 201, God always works through the agency of his willing image bearers to accomplish His will.

## CONCLUSION

In the introductory course (INT 200), we defined the Mission of God, and we made the connection between the fundamental nature of God and His Mission. We also saw how the choice of people to rebel against God changed the *work* of the mission. Although the *work* of the mission changed, the *goal* remained the same.

In the second MC Leadership course (MET 201), we looked at how God worked in different ways throughout human history toward the goal of his mission. He always employed human agency (he chose people through whom to work) to accomplish his missional efforts.



In this MC Leadership course (REL 202), we looked at the various ways Jesus was and is involved in God's mission in and through the Church. He did this by being example of each of the disciple making components. We saw him leaving heaven and going to the earth. We saw him immersing people in the nature and character and will of God as He loved them well and provided for their needs. We saw Him teaching both large crowds and in more intimate settings with His apostles. Then, we see Him giving the mission of making disciples to the Church and a promise to be with them as they stepped out in faith so Jesus could build His Church through them.

In the next course (MOT 203), we will take a look at why you would want to consider giving your life over to Jesus for the mission of God. This is the last course in the MC Leadership preparation track. It is an important consideration as you make the decision to step into this sacrificial, serving lifestyle of working with messy image bearers for the purpose of seeing them grow into spiritual maturity with the hope of seeing them too want to give their lives to this mission.