

# A Missional People

Series: ROOTS

Brad Bailey – November 13, 2022

## Intro

Take a moment ...amidst the weekend of Veterans Day...Honor to Veterans.

The decision to serve is a tangible declaration that you love your home—the place and its people—enough to bear profound burdens to sustain its existence and its way of life.

Memorial Day is the day set aside to remember our fallen brothers. **Veterans Day is a day dedicated to the living**, the people who stood at attention, honored the lost, absorbed their grief, and then did their job, day after day, month after month, year after year.

I know that **due to time** since the most major of wars... and the **Los Angeles... Westside... we become less connected...** and there may be ... **all who have served in active duty... across every branch...** and the National Guard.

And since we rarely stop to honor that unique position... of risk...I want to take this opportunity to ask all of those who have served in active duty as law enforcement or firefighting. Let's pray for these lives and who they represent.

## PRAY

Today... God has a call to a **different type of active duty**...as we engage the **mission of God**.

## REVIEW

This Fall we have engaged in a series entitled **ROOTS: Rediscovering our Foundations**. It is based on the **Biblical Book of Acts**. We are given an account of how the church began.... **our ancestry... spiritual DNA...**

## What do we learn from our spiritual “roots” ... about who we are?

- We are those who join in the **reuniting of human community** through Christ.  
... who unites us in God. (Profound uniting)
- We are **bearers of the Message** of Life.
- We **gather to grow together**... in the pattern of Jesus.
- We practice **generosity**... by trusting God as our provider.
- We discover and develop Christ's **compassion**.
- We engage in **teamwork** to make the Kingdom dream work.

And today we conclude...by hearing how from the beginning... **there was something expansive at hand**.

These are the words which Jesus said to his followers...

## Acts 1:8

**“...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

They were being **commissioned** to that which was expansive... which would begin in Jerusalem... their local city,, expand into Judea and Samaria....nearby regions that shared some cultural connection ...and to the ends of the earth... far beyond what was known and familiar.

Jesus is calling them to join God's expansive work...God's mission.  
This is God's nature...

### **Genesis 12:2-3**

**"I will make you into a great nation,  
and I will bless you...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**

It's through his line and his descendants that we get Jesus, God's blessing for all peoples.

God had chosen to make himself known through a people... not a hovering UFO over the world....but through those created in His image....

The prophet Isaiah said this of Israel.

### **Isaiah 49:6b (ESV)**

**I will make you as a light for the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."**

What is the source of this movement...and mission?

He says...**I will make you as a light... it is my salvation.**

This movement and mission does not begin in us...it **begins in God.**

It is the very nature of God. We are part of God's mission.

It is referred to as the "**Missio Dei**" which is the **Latin term** that can be translated as the "**mission of God,**" or the "**sending of God.**" [1]

**God the Father ...sending the Son,** and God the **Father and the Son** sending **the Spirit** was expanded to include yet another "movement": The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit **sending the church into the world.**

Mission is a movement from God to the world.

The church does not simply have a mission...but rather there is a divine mission that has a church.

**We don't simply have a mission... but rather a mission has us.**

**So the first thing** for us to grasp, is that....

**As a missional people...**

**1. We become active participants in the mission of God.**

To be united with God is to be united with the missional nature of God. [2]

The Book of Acts continues the story of God's mission through his Church.

We have engaged the first six chapters.

There we find the core values of God's missional community... but a community still amidst Jerusalem....where they first began.

What unfolds in the rest of the Book... through a full 28 chapters... is how it all expands.

Gospel... the good news of God's kingdom reign breaking in through the coming of Christ... was breaking out. It is the account of how this expansion began....from Jerusalem,, to nearby regions...and all the way into the heart of the Roman Empire...from which it would soon spread to the ends of the earth.

And all of this happened **in about thirty years time.**

I am going to simply highlight of few more keys to their missional life.

As we move forward in the Book of Acts... the underlying tension with the religious leaders breaks into open persecution.

#### **Acts 8:1, 4**

**“...a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria....”** <sup>4</sup> **Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.**

It was such religious leaders that and called for Christ to be crucified. When they pressed the Roman rulers to do so...they thought they had silenced this conflict. But just as they had been warned...this was a conflict with God... and who had raised Christ from the dead...and these witnesses could not be silenced. So they became more aggressive... The full text describes how they were **“Going from house to house dragging off men and women and putting them in prison.”**

**The result?... The church was scattered.**

To appreciate this scattering...**it helps to appreciate the significance that Jerusalem** held in their hearts.

For many...Jerusalem was **all they had ever known**... it's where all of their family was. Jerusalem represented God's unique promise to call them out as a unique people and nation. It represented their source of identity and affirmation. Jerusalem has been the center of God's presence. Jerusalem is the city that every Jewish life wished to go. In fact, the last verse in the Hebrew Bible records Cyrus's edict permitting every Jew to go up to Jerusalem (II Chron. 36:23). Jerusalem exerts a centripetal force on the Jews.

Now they were “scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.”

**We're their lives cast about merely chaos?**

They were scattered.... means to be dispersed, spread, distributed. There are different **words for “scattered” in Greek**. One means dispersed so that the item is gone from that point on, like scattering a person's ashes on the ocean's waves. That is not the **word used here in verses 1 and 4**. The word used here **means scattered in order to be planted**. It is exactly like the Hebrew word jezreel, **meaning “scattered” but also “planted.”** [3]

They were **not just scattered**... they were **planted**.

And with them...went the news of Christ...to which they now shared in every place.

**Verse 4...Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.**

Listen to what we are further told in shortly after....

#### **Acts 11:19-21**

**Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.** <sup>20</sup> **Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.** <sup>21</sup> **The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.**

This is the power of **God's sovereignty**... providence... that is at work in the world... and in our worlds...our lives

He is able to work good from what is far from good in itself.

The **persecution was being used** to fulfill God's plan of redemption of the world. This great **threat became a force... like the inertia of a rocket** to get out of the orbit... into new spheres.

The persecution was being used to fulfill God's plan of redemption of the world.

**A more modern example** is what happened in **1949 in China** when the National Government was defeated by the Communists. **637 China Inland Mission missionaries** were **obliged to leave**. It felt like an enemy had completely had their way.

But it created a change that no one could have imagined.

The national Christians in China, even under severe persecution, began to multiply and now total **thirty to forty times the number** they were when the missionaries left.”

**And those missionaries who had to leave?** Within four years 286 of them had been **redeployed in South-East Asia and Japan...** where the Gospel reached further. [4]

It's important to understand that the **Scriptures do not tell us** that **God is the primary cause** of such hatred and violence...**but that he used it.**

The purposes of God are not found in trying to name problems as good within themselves...but in **embracing whatever opportunity might arise** from them.

Later Paul would write, “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him” (Rom. 8:28).

**Scattering** can lead to **sowing**.

**Adversity** can be used for **advancement**.

**Problems** can be used for **progress**.

God uses people and problems to accomplish His purposes.

When these changes came upon **our spiritual fore parents... they taught us a lesson.**

**As a missional people...**

**2. We embrace God's mission wherever life takes us.**

Is that true of you? Wherever you find yourself—whether scattered by work or family or education or some other means—**have you allowed yourself to be planted in that place?**

Some of us like changes... even some hardship...but **most of us not only resent change... we have a hard time seeing the opportunity.**

It's hard for us to move beyond our comfort.

There is a part of our relational nature that wants to pull us into a tight circle... inward centripetal force... and this threat was bringing an outward centrifugal force.

Changes are hard... but they create opportunity.

A lot of your personality was formed by the age of 6... but your potential has come with every challenge and change since then.

***The reason you end up somewhere...is not the same as the purpose for you being there.***

I believe **these words speak very pointedly** to those of **us who live on the Westside of Los Angeles** in 2012. We live in a place that has been given to getting away from more settled places... and just enjoying for a season. Not only are many who live on the Westside likely to sense that it is just a place

they may live and enjoy for a season...that same dynamic affects those who may be long term residents.  
[5]

**We are the city of the scattered...** which is full of potential...if the seed will break through the surface and embrace the ground.

Seeds have life within themselves....but they also have an outside covering.... And that covering must become engaged with the ground in order for the covering to be penetrated and interact with the elements.

***Are we just scattered... resentful and resistant...or are we being planted into God's purposes... active in His mission?***

There are people for which you are the closest source of salt and light.

Many of us are so quick to feel the awkwardness... resistance... so let me quickly clarify  
**Two things that can be vital to grasp...**in terms of being a missional life...and bearing God's light.

**1. We are called to be witnesses who testify...not those who presume to control anyone.**

Jesus asked those he impacted...to "go tell them what I have done for you" ....Be prepared to give an answer for what..."the hope that is within you" and "with gentleness and respect"

**Nothing pressured... nothing packaged. Just the courage to be personal.**

**2. Any initial resistance of others towards our faith in God... never reflects the whole picture or the final process within them.**

While resistance may arise and appear as an initial response... there may be more that lies within the heart. Jesus taught us to understand soil.

As a missional people...let's embrace God's mission wherever life takes us.

....Another missional quality is found as described in Acts 13:2-3

**Acts 13:2-3**

**While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup> So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.**

**As a missional people...**

**3. We go or send others to new frontiers.**

Previously the church had embraced where circumstances had moved them...but now they were intentionally sending people to new places. Before they expanded reactively...but now they had become proactive in being expansive.

We do well to **imagine what they felt.**

They were sending off those who had added to their lives... provided a source of encouragement and strength. [6]

It isn't easy.

We like to hold onto the relationships we have.

This is a form of generosity... a very real sacrificial one. It's relational generosity.

**John Wimber**...the founder of our Vineyard movement...sowed this calling into the movement:

***"Give away you best."***

He knew how hard it was to do that... but he knew that it is essential to being an expansive people... a movement that plants new churches.

We go out and send out

**4 years ago**... we blessed many to launch the Mid-City Vineyard. (PICTURE)

**2 years ago** we blessed a team to help launch Spanish language Vineyards in the Houston area. (Picture)

**Because as a missional people...**

**We go or send others to new frontiers**

Finally...

**As a missional people...**

**4. We join the unstoppable.**

**If we step back... and look at how God declared the start of his kingdom through Christ... it is hard to explain.**

**Born amidst peasants...the obscurity of a people** now under Roman rule... never traveled to the major cities not sought the attention of power...and finally.... His profound claims and power were too much for the local religious leaders...so the pressed...and ...The Roman Empire did what it did...crucified him.

I can't help but think of what Jesus said.... Using the word "church" for the first time, Jesus made this unchanging, unwavering and glorious promise:

**"I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18**

Said nothing is going to stop it.

Hi words were recorded... LONG before the church...had spread far.

It is a fact...that Jesus declared that which was delusional for any powerless wandering carpenter in Judea to say.

Yet... he had a power that was unlike any other.

And he is at the center of the mission of God.

VIDEO: **The Spread of the Gospel HD** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Gp-ZsUaqc>

OR <https://vimeo.com/113801439>

**Rather striking to see how the words of Jesus have unfolded.** Some stats. [7]

- **In 1900, more than half** of the world population (54.3%) was **unreached**. That has **now fallen to just over a quarter** of the world. (28%), according to the 2022 Status of Global Christianity report.
- The center of Christianity **has moved to the global south** with exploding growth rates in Asia and Africa. The Christian community in Latin America and Africa accounts for one billion people!
- As Christianity continues to grow in the global South, it is also becoming **increasingly less concentrated**. In 1900, 95% of all Christians lived in a majority Christian country. In 2022, that number has fallen to 53.7%. By 2050, most Christians (50.4%) around the world will live in non-majority Christian nations.
- And this may surprise us... the country where the church is growing the fastest?

- **Iran** (Operation World reports that due to prayer, increased Bible distribution, disillusionment with Islam, use of media, along with persecution, the church in Iran is the “fastest growing in the world.”) [8]

As Jesus told his disciples...nothing is going to stop what God is doing.  
He calls the church “my church.” This is not your church or my church; it is his.

**CLOSING:**

Today... on this Veteran’s Day weekend... God wants to call us into active duty.

**In John 17:18**, Jesus said this –

***“In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world.” - John 17:18***

“God had one son, and he became a foreign missionary.” (David Livingston)

Begins with where we live.

Some of us may realize we have gone into survival mode.

**Whatever problems are at hand... it’s about finding purpose amidst life’s problems’**

Some of us may feel we have allowed ourselves to accept being silent.

We need to find our appropriate voice... that which testifies to who Christ is.

**Join in the Holiday Party Challenge.**

If you get involved in your mission in the world, **it is going to cost you.**

**...but God has promised eternal rewards.**

***Mark 10:29 (LB)***

***Jesus replied, “Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything... for love of Me and to tell others the Good News, who won’t be given back, a hundred times over...” - Mark 10:29 (LB)***

PRAY...A call to become activated.

In the mission of God... there is no inactive duty... there is the life of Jesus... fully active.

He came into this world as the sent one.

He calls us into the same.

**NOTE: The following is an optional element which was not sed, but could be used if adding or reshaping a call to global missions:**

**VIDEO** - The Vineyard Global Family

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFm98v7rMQ0&t=118s>

**Notes:**

1. According to David J. Bosch, "mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God." (David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991, 389–390).

Jurgen Moltmann says, "It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church." (Jurgen Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology, London: SCM Press, 1977, 64)

2. Alan Hirsch

*“The church’s true and authentic organizing principle is mission.... a community of God’s people that defines itself, and organizes its life around God’s mission to the world.” - Alan Hirsch*  
Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006, 82

3. J. M. (1997). *Acts : An expositional commentary (130–134)*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books

4. Originally referred to by John Stott. *The Spirit, The Church and The World: The Message of Acts*. [Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 1990.] p. 146.)

5. A look at 2010 census stats shows that:

U.S. – almost 65% owner occupied housing versus 30% rental occupied

Santa Monica is only 28% owner occupied and Marina Del Rey only 7%...Culver City much higher at 53%. Much of the areas that are still part of Los Angeles such as Palms, West L.A. are not broken out but are heavily weighted with apartments over houses.

This would suggest that the Westside of Los Angeles as a whole is likely a least 70% - 75% rental, which is a statistic heard over the years....likely highest on those areas furthest west.

6. The relational cost of embracing movement... and moves...is heard in Paul’s departure in Acts 20. “When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. <sup>37</sup> They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. <sup>38</sup> What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.” - Acts 20:36-38

7. Some stats found [here](#)

Also notable, in the midst of a trend in the NW ... of secularism... and atheism... there are fewer atheists around the world today (147 million) than in 1970 (165 million), and the Gordon-Conwell report expects the number to continue to decline into 2050

8. Meet the World’s Fastest-Growing Evangelical Movement February 8, 2021 | SARAH EEKHOFF ZYLSTRA [here](#)