

# Covenant Membership

## Session 6 | Our Mission: How We Know and Love the World

---

### Introduction

- A. This week we'll be unpacking our third and final Value as a church—**Our Mission: How We Know and Love the World**. Similar to our handling of the first two, (1) I will first reintroduce the **Value** to us in more detail; (2) and then we will look at one of our **Passions** that flow out from this Value.

### Key Text

I identified **2 Corinthians 5:20** as the **key text** for this Value. Allow me to read it in **context** here as we begin: “<sup>11</sup> *Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. . . .* <sup>14</sup> *For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;* <sup>15</sup> *and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

<sup>16</sup> *From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.* <sup>17</sup> *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* <sup>18</sup> *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;* <sup>19</sup> *that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.* <sup>20</sup> *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.* <sup>21</sup> *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (**2 Cor 5:11a, 14–21**).*

### Partnership Created

- A. I wonder how many of us in this room are aware of the **breathtaking** reality that we have been **created** for **partnership** with God! It sounds almost **blasphemous**, but it's **biblical**.
1. Certainly, I do not mean to imply by this that we are in any way **equal** with God. Far from it. He is the **Creator**, we are the **creature**. He is the **Potter**, we are the **clay**. He is the **Master**, we are the **slave**.
    - a. But in an act of amazing **condescension** and **love**, we are also **partners** with Him, called into the **holy march** of His **mission** in the world.
- B. You were created for so much more than the **nine to five**; than a **big house** and a **picket fence**; than **family dinners** and late night **television**; than a **college degree**, a **successful career**, and a leisurely **retirement** by the sea. You were created to **partner** with God on His mission in **all of life**.
- C. I use the word **“created”** advisedly, because this has been God's design for humanity from the very **beginning**.

1. When God created man, He immediately put them on His **mission**. Adam was called to **“work and keep”** (Gen 2:15) the garden sanctuary of God’s presence. Adam and Eve together were to **“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over [it]”** (1:28).
  - a. They were in essence to move out from Eden with God’s **Presence**, as God’s **People**, for God’s **Purpose**. Or, to use the language of our Values, they were to move out with **Faith, Community, and Mission**.

## Partnership Lost

- A. But they **abandon** Faith in God, **break** Community with one another, and **abort** the Mission God gave them in this world. Man breaks partnership with God and goes into **business** for himself. And the **tapestry** of creation unravels.
- B. This is the world we live in today. With **towers of Babel** being erected on every street corner: **“Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves”** (Gen 11:4). **“Who cares about His name?! It’s all about my name!”**
  1. We mistakenly think that life will be so much **better** without God breathing over our backs. We think things will finally be fulfilling.
    - a. But we find that all of this actually has precisely the **opposite** effect. Life starts to feel **mundane** and **boring, two-dimensional** and **grayscale**.
- C. Even when we get **everything** we’ve been working for, there’s something **fundamentally dissatisfying** about it. Something **counterfeit**.
  1. **Dr. Steven Berglas**, a UCLA psychologist who counsels executives on success-induced burnout speaks of a **growing phenomenon** called **“success depression”**: *“People have this notion that ‘If I only make CEO, if I only become the top talent agent, if I make my first million, that will do it, all my insecurities will go poof.’ You hit the pinnacle, then you wake up the next day and you’re still the same insecure [person] you always were.”*
    - a. The success doesn’t **alleviate** the depression, it **aggravates** it. Because life is about something so **much more**, and deep down, we all know it. We were created for partnership with God, to be on His mission, to build for the glory of His name.
- D. Maybe some of you are experiencing this to varying degrees even right now. You’re on a mission alright, but just not God’s. And it’s **maddening**. It’s **oppressive**. It’s **never enough**. It’s **depressing**. God has so **much more** for you in Jesus!

## Partnership Regained

- A. This is what Paul is identifying for us in **2 Corinthians 5**: *“He died for all, that those who live might no longer live **for themselves** but **for him** who for their sake died and was raised” (v. **15**).*
1. Jesus offers us a way out of the **downward spiral** and back up into the **rush** of partnership with God. Through the death and resurrection of Christ we have been saved from the **tyranny of self**. We live **for Him** now.
    - a. Or as Paul puts it down in **6:1**: *“[We] work . . . together with Him.”* Life, all of life, is suddenly infused with new **meaning, color, and three-dimensionality**.
- B. But **what exactly does it mean to be on God’s mission?** What is it that we are doing?
1. Here’s where **Ephesians 5:20** comes in to help: *“[W]e are **ambassadors** for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”*
    - a. We are God’s **ambassadors**, His **official representatives** in this world. He makes His **appeal** to the world *“through us”*. And His appeal is none other than this: *“Be reconciled to God.”*
- C. Where **Adam and Eve** were to move out into creation and fill the **uninhabited earth** with God’s **glory**, now we are to move out into a creation **filled** with **violence, sin, depravity, oppression**, and **injustice** and call its inhabitants **back** to God’s **glory**: *“Be reconciled to God.”*
1. God, in His **holiness** and **justice**, is **furious** with the **sinner**. But God, in great **grace** and **mercy**, has poured out His fury upon His **Son**.
    - a. It is therefore both *“the **fear of the Lord**” (v. **11**)* and *“the **love of Christ**” (v. **14**)* that compels us. We see both God’s **wrath** and God’s **grace**, and we cry out to the world: *“Be reconciled to God.”*
- D. I thought of the great evangelist **D.L. Moody** here: *“When Dwight L. Moody was in London during one of his famous evangelistic tours, several British clergymen visited him. They wanted to know how and why this poorly educated American was so effective in winning throngs of people to Christ. Moody took the three men to the window of his hotel room and asked each in turn what he saw. One by one, the men described the people in the park below. Then Moody looked out the window with tears rolling down his cheeks. ‘What do you see, Mr. Moody?’ asked one of the men. ‘I see countless thousands of souls that will one day spend eternity in hell if they do not find the Savior’”* (Today in the Word, Feb 1, 1997, p. 6).
1. Is that the **window** you’re looking through?

## The Missional Church

- A. It is to the **church** in particular that God entrusts this “*ministry of reconciliation*” ([v. 18](#)).
1. When we are **reconciled to God** through Christ (Faith), not only are we reconciled to **one another** in the church (Community), but we are also given a **ministry of reconciliation** for the **world** (Mission).
    - a. **Faith** brings us into **Community**, and our Community is sent out on **Mission**.
- B. Hear **Spurgeon** on this: *"We ought to regard the Christian Church, not as a luxurious hostelry where Christian gentlemen may each one dwell at his ease in his own inn, but as a barracks in which soldiers are gathered together to be drilled and trained for war. We should regard the Christian church not as an association for mutual admiration and comfort, but as an army with banners, marching to the fray to achieve victories for Christ, to storm the strongholds of the foe and to add province after province to the Redeemer's kingdom"* (The Soul Winner, pp. 203-204).
1. We have been **reconciled to reconcile; saved to save; freed to free; loved to love; blessed to bless**. And if we **die** we **die**, because to **lose** my life for His sake is to finally **find** it ([Matt 10:39](#))!

## Our Passions

### (1) Holistic Evangelism

- A. If we are on **God's Mission**, as **God's Ambassadors**, compelled by a vision of both His **holy wrath** and **free grace**, it would be wise for us to give great consideration to what this might **look like** in our day to day lives.
1. To get at this I want to identify a particular Passion that flows out of our Value at this point: namely, **Holistic Evangelism**.

### What Is Evangelism?

- A. Let me begin to flesh this out by asking first: **What is Evangelism?**
1. Certainly, evangelism is **fundamentally** the proclamation of the **evangel**, the **gospel**, the **good news** of Jesus Christ. If we do not share this good news, this “*message of reconciliation*” ([2 Cor 5:19](#)), we do not evangelize.
- B. But this announcement of Christ's death and resurrection, is so much more than just a mere **information dump**. It is an **invitation** for our listeners to come **back to the God** who created them, to let Him put them **back together**, to let Him make them **fully human** again. In its fullest sense, **evangelization is rehumanization**. It's how the **dead** come back to **life**.

1. Christianity is not **drab** and **boring**. It is not merely a set of **rules** or **beliefs**, it is a **new way to be human**. And by new I mean **old**. It's humanity according to **ancient design**. It's humanity as it **should be**.
- C. As an illustration, we might consider a scene from C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia. **Aslan** has just risen from the dead and he's going through the **courtyards** and the **dungeons** of the White Witch's castle and **breathing** on all the creatures that she had turned to stone. And with the **exhale** of Aslan's breath, the stone starts to **thaw**, **color** starts to come back to the creatures, and they come **alive** again.
1. This is what **Jesus** does through the **preaching** of the gospel. He **exhales** His Spirit through the **proclamation** of His **Ambassadors**. He does this through you and through me, for people with hearts as cold as stone. ***Evangelization is rehumanization!***

### What Is *Holistic* Evangelism?

- A. Now, why do I say we're passionate about ***Holistic*** Evangelism?
- B. Unfortunately, when most people think of evangelism they have this **truncated, narrow** view of it. Evangelism is memorizing a **technique** and passing out **tracts**. We have this sense that we're only doing evangelism if our **hearts** are racing, our **palms** are sweating, and we're about to go approach a **stranger** to share four spiritual laws or whatever.
1. **While evangelism certainly should involve this kind of direct approach, this is not all that evangelism is.** It is not merely something you do for an **hour** here or there as the Lord leads or as your church compels you.
    - a. **Evangelism in a broader sense should be happening all the time. It's a lifestyle—something you're doing in the everyday stuff of life.**
    - i. **Holistic Evangelism means we are living out our full humanity before the world and inviting them into it through Christ.**
- C. I would humbly submit to you that our categories of ***Faith, Community, and Mission*** actually serve us well here again. For if God created not just the **church**, but all of **humanity**, every person you meet, to exist in His **Presence**, as His **People**, with His **Purpose**, then it is right for us to consider even unbelievers along the lines of Faith, Community, and Mission.
1. **They too were created for intimate relationship with God (Faith), for loving relationship with others (Community), and for meaningful relationship with the world (Mission).**
    - a. **They might no longer have these things, they might be settling for cheap counterfeits of these things, but there's still a residual memory and longing for these things. They've been created in His image, and though the image is marred, it's still there.**

- D. When we come and live out our **Faith, Community, and Mission** before them, it's as if we are **breathing** on their stony hearts, **blowing** on the embers of the image of God in them—**fanning** into flame a desire for the full humanity that is available to them in Christ.
- E. So **Holistic Evangelism** attempts to meet the unbeliever along these three lines of **Faith, Community, and Mission**. Let's consider each one briefly now.

## (1) Faith

- A. Consider evangelism along the line of **Faith**—people have been created for **intimate relationship** with God.
- B. Certainly this would include what we **usually** think of when we think of evangelism. We talk to people about their relationship with God. We knock on **doors**, we give away **gospel tracts**, we share with **family members** over the phone, we call people to **repentance** and **faith**. We just go for it!
- C. But this also involves **living out our relationship** with God before others so that they can see what it looks like. We aren't **censoring** ourselves. Christians often speak **two dialects**—one when we're in the **church**, and one when we're in the **world**.
  - 1. In the church: *"How are you **doing**?" "I'm blessed. God is good. Let me tell you how He's been ministering to me lately."* In the world: *"How are you **doing**?" "I'm good. I'm enjoying this fall weather. The Warriors' season is about to start. Things are great."*
    - a. Now **why** do we do that? It's my contention that the **world needs to see** our relationship with God, the relationship with God they too were created to have. They may **laugh** at us, they may say we're **weird**, but I believe that in those moments we just might be **breathing** on stone, **blowing** on the embers of God's image in them, **fanning** into flame a desire to be truly human again.
- D. I think of **David Lin** here and his Meeting Jesus discussion group. I think of **Pearl Lim** and Kids Club. I think of people like **Cathy Craig** and **Josh McGuire**. They just desire to speak the gospel to anyone they meet. Josh is even in the process of learning Spanish right now so that he can more effectively speak to the people in this neighborhood about Jesus.
  - 1. We want more of this in our church! Let's keep **dreaming** about how we can evangelize the world along the line of **Faith**.

## (2) Community

- A. Consider evangelism along the line of **Community**—people have been created for **loving relationships** with one another.
- B. We can get to the **message of reconciliation** in the way we **relate** to people. In a world that's **forgotten** them, that treats them like **cogs** in a machine, like **objects** to manipulate,

we come in and give them our **attention**, our **time**, our **care**. We look them in the **eyes**. We listen to their **stories**. We **laugh** with them. We **weep** with them. **We love them like Christ has loved us.** We treat them like **human beings**.

1. And in so doing we **breathe** on the stone, we **blow** on the embers, we **fan** the flame!
- C. Consider this example: *“Every summer, Dr. Jack Miller at Westminster Theological Seminary takes a large group of students and church members with him for three weeks of street preaching in Dublin, Ireland. They are on the streets almost all day long, witnessing, sharing . . . the gospel. Everyone they speak with is invited to a common meal held in the evening at a nearby church. The meal is quite simple. There are singing, some testimonies, and prayer. Here the unchurched, the curious, the converts, are given a taste of koinonia [fellowship]. One student said to me after that trip, ‘I think the most effective part of our ministry is carried on at the meal table. The guests see the church suddenly as a caring, sharing fellowship; **their bargain with God is sealed by a cup of coffee**’”* (Conn, p. 37).
- D. No longer are we just **telling** people the gospel, we are **showing** it to them. The way **we love them**, leads them to the **love of God**. **Community** leads back to **Faith** and brings them into the **Mission**.
- E. This is what **Lynn Kuehn** is doing with the Sihora Clinic. They’re serving the poorest of the poor and loving them to Jesus. This is what **Patty Madden** is doing with Foster the Bay. Our God is a Father to the fatherless, and we want to love these kids back to Him. This is what **Jill LeMoine** is doing in my neighborhood. She’s just there. She’s available to love on people. She’s taking neighbors to the hospital. She sets up block parties. She’s giving people a taste of the Community they were created for, the Community Christ is ready to redeem them back into.
  1. We want more of this in our church! Let’s keep **dreaming** about how we can evangelize the world along the line of **Community**.

### (3) Mission

- A. Consider evangelism along the line of **Mission**—people have been created for **meaningful relationship** with the world.
- B. **Unbelievers** want the world and all that they are doing to have **meaning, purpose**, to be a part of something **big**. But they rob themselves of this when they go into **business for ourselves**. Everything gets small.
  1. Then along comes the **church**. We have been put on the **greatest mission** in the universe. And we bring our **new humanity** into our **workplaces**, into our **classrooms**, into our **neighborhoods**, into our **family rooms**. We live out a different **narrative**—one that is written not by the **world**, the **flesh**, and the **devil** but by the **Father**, the **Son**, and the **Spirit** in us. And it’s **alluring**!

- C. We don't **work, parent, play, rest, suffer**, or even **eat** and **drink** like the world. It's all done differently. It all has a **richer meaning** and **greater purpose**.
1. When the **unbeliever eats and drinks** he does it with his **belly**, his **appetites**, in view (**Phil 3:19**). When a believer eats and drinks He does it with **thanksgiving** to his God (**1 Tim 4:4**). There are dimensions to our enjoyment of a good **steak** that the unbeliever knows nothing about. "My God created this and gave it to me. Thanks you!" And that's **alluring**. We're **breathing** on stone.
  2. Or consider what Paul says about our suffering: *"[We do] not **grieve** as others do who have no hope" (1 Th 4:13)*. When we suffer, we handle it differently because the **mission isn't about us**. It's bigger than us. And we have a God who says **hold on**, I'm doing something here. We suffer with **hope**. And that's **alluring**. We're **blowing** on embers.
  3. Or when we **work**, Paul says we are to *"adorn"* the gospel (**Titus 2:10**). We work with **integrity** and for the **good of others**. We have a greater purpose than just getting a **paycheck** or making ourselves **look great**. We want to make our God look great and show Him off. And we labor out of **love** for Him. We're not **owned** by our job. We're **free**. And that's **alluring**. We're **fanning** the flame.
    - a. I think of **Sanvi Bruce** here. When his job seemed to be on the line and yet he just had this peace. And everyone's asking, *"What's up? Aren't you worried?" "My God is in control. He's going to take care of me."* That's crazy in Silicon Valley where your job is your life.
- D. And as people see how we relate to the world with this greater **Mission**, they just might see the God that **stands with us** in it and be brought to **Faith** and into our **Community**.
1. We want more of this in our church! Let's keep **dreaming** about how we can evangelize the world along the line of **Mission**.
- E. O brothers and sisters, I hope you catch a **passion** for **Holistic Evangelism**. Evangelism isn't merely something you put on your calendar and do for an **hour**, it's a **lifestyle**—it's being **fully human** in Christ and calling the world into it as well!
- F. I pray, as we now bring this series to a **close**, that you might seriously consider **covenanting** with us as we seek to know and love the **Lord**, the **church**, and the **world**!