

**Introduction:** I want you to think for a moment about the people you will interact with this coming week.

- Think about the people you work with.
- The people who live near you.
- The people you see at the gym.
- The parents you see at your kids' activities.
- The people you have coffee with.
- The people you play golf with.
- The people you see at the grocery store.
- The people who sit next to you at work.
- The people you text.
- The people you have known for twenty years.
- And maybe even the people you don't know very well yet.

**Question:** What if none of those relationships are accidental?

Today I want to talk about your calling as a Christian. We tend to think about our calling or mission as something that requires us to go somewhere.

- We think about missionaries going overseas.
- We think about pastors standing on platforms.
- We think about evangelists preaching to crowds.
- We think about a church organizing an outreach event.

But what if God's primary mission for you isn't somewhere else? What if it's right where you already are?

- What if the mission field is your office?
- Your neighborhood?
- Your family?
- Your coffee shop?
- Your classroom?
- Your hobby?

- Your friendship?
- Your ordinary Tuesday morning?

Here's some truth: When Jesus called you to follow him, he didn't call you to stop living an ordinary life. He called you to live an ordinary life in an extraordinary way—as his representative.

Paul says, "We are Christ's ambassadors." An ambassador doesn't have to go looking for a place to represent his country. He's already been sent somewhere.

And if you're a follower of Jesus, you've already been sent somewhere too. God has already placed you in a mission field. The question is whether you recognize it.

**[Transition]** – This morning I want us to look at the pattern Jesus gave us for living our calling and mission. Before Jesus ever asks us to live this way, he models it for us. He shows us what it looks like. He lives it out. And then he turns to his followers and essentially says, "Now you go do the same."

You can observe Jesus' pattern clearly in each of the first three Gospels, but for our purposes this morning I want to show you this pattern in the Gospel of Luke. I want to do a quick overview of a few chapters in Luke with you.

Now, if you've been around Foothills church for a while, this might sound familiar to you. That's good...that's why we call this a refresh. But I know there are many of you who are new to our Foothills Family so for you this will be new. Turn in your Bibles to Luke Chapter 5 and let's do a quick survey of what we see there.

**Jesus models your calling.**

As we move through Luke 5-10 we see Jesus doing three things over and over again.

### **1. Jesus connected with and called people to himself:**

Luke 5:1-11- The calling of Peter, James, and John

5: 27-28 - Calling of Levi

6:12-16 - These verses indicate that there were a number of disciples that had connected with Jesus and were following him and out of those Jesus chose 12 to be Apostles—meaning “Ones who are sent with a special message or mission.”

[**Transition**] - So, Jesus is gathering people to himself. And he’s connecting people to himself...but he doesn’t stop there...

### **2. Jesus grew his followers:**

Luke 6:17- Chapter 8 - We see Jesus doing life with his followers, teaching, challenging them...correcting them...he answers all their questions, he demonstrates what love looks like, he shows them grace, he heals, and he serves people. Basically, he models kingdom of God right in front of them.

[**Transition**] - And as they spend time with him something happens. They start acting like him. But, then Jesus does something else. He trains, equips, and sends them out. Look at Luke 9.

### **3. Jesus equipped and sent his followers out to serve:**

Luke 9:1-6 - Jesus sends out the 12 Apostles to represent him and take his message to others.

Luke 10:1-17—Jesus sends out the 72 disciples to minister in his name

Think about this: Jesus didn't establish a movement that depended upon everyone continually coming to him. He developed people who could go in his name.

- He connected them.
- He grew them.
- He equipped them.

- And then he sent them.

Basically it's this: Connect. Grow. Send.

That was Jesus' strategy for establishing the kingdom of God. And look at what happened? With a relatively small group of people, over the course of just a few years, Jesus established a movement that would literally change the world.

And here we are, more than 2,000 years later. Many of us have responded to that same invitation.

- We've trusted Jesus.
- We've been forgiven by Jesus.
- We've been changed by Jesus.

And now Jesus says: "Now go represent me."

**[Transition]** - Now, when you couple this overall pattern of Jesus – connecting, growing, and sending his followers—with two pivotal statements Jesus made, the purpose and strategy of the church become incredibly clear. The first statement I want to show you is called the Great Commission – Matthew 28:18-20

### **Jesus gave us our mission.**

1. The first super important statement Jesus made is called the Great Commission – Matthew 28:18-20

*"Jesus came and told his disciples, 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"*

We've talked about this before. Even though the word "Go" is first in the sentence, the main action verb in this statement is "make disciples." And the rest of the statement describes different actions involved in the command to "make disciples"—Things like...engaging with people,

helping them connect with Jesus, baptizing them, teaching them about Jesus, and about how-to walk-in obedience to him in their lives.

Now, I want you to notice an aspect of this commission that often goes overlooked or misunderstood. It starts out, ***“Therefore, go...”*** The form of this phrase carries the sense of ongoing activity. Essentially, it’s saying to you...***as you are going...as you are going about your life... do these things!*** As you are going, wherever you are going, and whatever you are doing in your going...represent Jesus!—Point to him! Reflect him! Refer to him. Talk about him!

Jesus is giving his followers a calling or a mission which he is going to do with them...so this is a CO-Mission. *“This is what I want you to do, and I’m going to be with you and I’ll empower you.”*

What this all means is the church is not primarily a place or a building. The church is the people of Jesus on the go in their lives, representing him wherever they go.

***This means...***Sunday isn’t the destination of your Christianity. Sunday is the refueling station for your mission. In other words the church gathers... so that the church can scatter.

Now...don’t get me wrong...there are tons of valuable things that happen in the gathering on Sundays—prayer, encouragement, teaching, training, fellowship, and celebrating communion.

I’m not diminishing the importance of the gathering on Sundays or whenever. But please realize “the gathering” is intended to be a kind of rest and resource experience, which refreshed and revived believers for their “going mission.”

The means, ***“gathered church” fuels the “scattered church.”*** In other words, what happens at the church gathering—fellowship, worship, teaching, etc.—is all for the purpose of enabling you to fulfill your mission “as you go” into your week and into your world.

**[Transition]** - We're going to put all this together in a moment. But, before we do, let me remind you of one other important statement Jesus made. It is found in Matthew 22...a text that is known as the Great Commandment. I've shown this to you before.

2. The second super important statement Jesus made is the Great Commandment—Matthew 22:35-40

*"One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

Boiled down, Jesus is saying, *being a Christian really involves two primary practices...love God—Love others!*

**[Transition]** - Now, let's put all we've talked about so far together. When you combine the practice of Jesus we observed in Luke—connecting, growing, and sending his followers—with the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, your "as you go" calling becomes very clear.

Your "as you go" calling is to connect people to Jesus and help them grow to love and serve him. **Connect - Grow - Serve.**  
Let me unpack these three primary components.

**1. You are called to help connect people to Jesus** - Turn in your Bibles to Mark 2:1-12...I want to read a story for you.

This is such a beautiful picture of our calling. These friends...going about their lives...did what was necessary to get their friend in front of Jesus so he could connect with him. I want to look at this story in more detail with

you next week but for today, I want you to see these friends did four key things:

- They noticed him...they saw his need.
- They cared...they didn't leave him where he was.
- They sacrificed...they carried him...and tore through the roof.
- They brought him to Jesus...they understood what their friend ultimately needed.

You may not be able to fix someone's marriage, heal their disease, solve their financial crisis, or answer every question they have. But, you can help them get in front of Jesus.

Some might be thinking, "But isn't evangelism the Pastor's job? Isn't talking about Jesus the church's job? You're right! It IS the church's job... and YOU ARE THE CHURCH.

The "gathered church" partners with you in this calling, but the calling is primarily yours. The "gathered church" partners with you and seeks to create opportunities for you to bring friends, neighbors, or co-workers. But this mission is primarily yours.

To assist you, the church plans efforts like Christmas Eve and Easter services/Senior Nutrition, Women's events...Men's events, Student Ministry GLOW night, Beat the Heat Children's events, and After School Bible Clubs, to build relational bridges with the hopes of bringing the gospel across those bridges.

These can be helpful, but fundamentally each of you are the church... sent out and scattered into a mass of different spaces and places...into corners of our community and region...and into conversations and relationships where God has you.

God has strategically placed you around people I will never meet.

- Your workplace puts you beside people.
- Your neighborhood puts you beside people.

- Your hobbies put you beside people.
- Your kids' activities put you beside people.
- Your ordinary routines put you beside people.

And they all long for the same kindness, thoughtfulness, and care that you crave from time to time because they are human...just like you.

And here's some good news: *You don't have to manufacture a mission field. You already have one.* You don't have to try to search for common ground and worry about how you are going to relate. God has you in that place. Your rubbing elbows because you have something in common. You're sharing an experience -be it a job, a hobby, or a neighborhood. *You really don't have to manufacture a mission field. You already have one!*

### **Here's how you answer this calling with the people you are around:**

- Be present.
- Be kind, considerate, and caring to them.
- Put them on your prayer list.
- Build genuine relationships.
- Talk naturally about your faith, about how you do life and the things that matter to you.
- When it comes up, speak up about your biblical perspective on things without using Bible-speak or Christianese.

Can I be honest? I say that because when you use Bible-speak or Christianese...it sounds weird to people. So, just use normal language so you can connect with them and relate with them in a way that makes sense to them. ***Share your life with them, in your style and in your temperament.***

Guys...bottom line...As you relate normally with people, and as you share kindness and care, God will open doors for you to speak directly to what it means to know God and experience forgiveness and the peace and hope he provides.

Often this happens when a health crisis hits, or a financial crisis, or a death and they come to you because you have built bridges of kindness and consideration that open the way for the deeper conversations.

**[Transition]** - Let me explain to you why I believe all this so deeply—not just from Scripture, but from my own life.

**[My Story]** - My parents had me in in the little country church we attended about 2 miles from my home in central Ohio from my earliest years. One Sunday morning, I was lying flat out on my back on the wooden church pew with the back of my head resting on my Mom's leg. I was five years old, and the Pastor was making his final remarks in that Sunday morning's sermon. He was giving an invitation to become a Christian.

For some reason, that Sunday morning I felt like he was talking directly to my heart. He invited any who knew they needed forgiveness to come down to the altar and ask Jesus to forgive their sin. I went forward. I was five and I lived in the country in central Ohio. So, I didn't have a ton to confess nor a ton of temptation to resist. But I knew I wanted to be friends with Jesus.

I continued in church as a kid for the most part, but when I became a freshman in High School, I was losing interest. During my Junior High years, my father had started his own commercial refrigeration company, and he was working all hours of the day and night and our family dropped out of church pretty much. Through a series of seemingly random events, I ended up at a church summer camp. I just went to help set up. But, they invited me to stay for dinner. Then they invited me to stay for the bonfire and teaching time. At that campfire, the speaker invited us to commit our lives to Jesus. I decided then and there that I was going to make my life count, and live for Jesus.

Shortly after that, I started attending an actual youth group at another church in town and I got connected to a youth pastor there who discipled

me, challenged me, and gave me opportunities to explore and use my gifts.

When I was a Junior, college decisions were looming. I started to think further down the path about my life and career choices and how I should spend my life. And I began to have thoughts and passion about stuff I had never had. I began to have an undeniable desire push up inside of me that I had never felt before.

The desire was to use my life energy for something that was eternal. I had no desire to spend my life—my time, money or energy on anything that in the end was going to burn. Not normal thinking for a 16 year old, right? Trust me...that was not me...that was the Spirit of God putting his call on my life. And I later discerned that, went and got the appropriate education, and have given myself to that call ever since.

"When I look back at my story, I can see God's hand everywhere. But here's what I find most amazing: *God accomplished his purpose through ordinary people simply doing their part, right where God had them.*"

Somebody brought me to church.

Somebody taught me.

Somebody invited me to camp.

Somebody disciplined me.

Somebody gave me an opportunity to serve.

And God used all of it to connect me, grow me, and eventually send me."

*Nobody did everything...but everybody did something. Nobody did everything...but everybody did something!* That's the church. That's God's design. That's the mission.

**[Application]** - Here's something I want to ask you:

Who helped you find Jesus? Who helped you grow? Who believed in you enough to give you an opportunity to serve?

Like me you're super grateful for them, right? Grateful they answer the call in those moments with you.

And now...in these days...

Who is God asking you to help?

Who is the person you're supposed to notice?

Who needs your friendship?

Who needs your encouragement?

Who needs someone to pray for them?

Who needs someone to invite them?

Who needs someone to tell them what Jesus has done for you?

I pray this message today will inspire you to step out and step up...

Because someday, someone may be standing where I am standing, telling their story—and part of that story may be about you."

Pray...