



THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH (Week 4) - The Motive of Mission

Prayer of Blessing Upon the Word:

O blessed God — Father, Son and Spirit — our God, who cannot be contained in houses of worship made with our hands, we ask that You make Your presence known among us now as we worship You. Gracious God, as we gather together this Sunday as Your people, on this day of worship, may we find our rest in You. May we find our peace in You. May we find hope and rejoicing in You. We now lift our

hearts in adoration and thanksgiving before Your throne. And so now with grateful hearts, we praise You for Your Son, our Lord Jesus, for His life and death and resurrection, for all the work He has done on our behalf to make us sons and daughters of God. For while we have stumbled, through Him you have lifted us up. And while we have sinned, through faith in Him we have received full pardon and a complete and final Sabbath rest from working to earn Your favor.

Introduction - Good Sunday School Question by Eight-year old

God's plan for us from before we were born was a plan of love.

In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

The impetus (the force that makes something happen) of the mission God has given us is love. Love was the impetus of His mission. In love He predestined us. For God so loved the world that He sent His one and only Son. Love is the driving force of mission. And to be a loving church we have to love each other.

The motive of the mission

John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

Grace must not just define our relationship with Christ, it must define our relationship with one another. If you have been shown grace in Jesus Christ, then show that grace to someone else. "Accept one another as Christ has accepted you."

As a matter of fact, Jesus said this should be the mark of the church.

35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

"By this all people" — this is our witness to the world. This is our evangelism strategy. (More on this later.)

"In the midst of the world, in the midst of our present dying culture, Jesus is giving a right to the world. Upon his authority he gives the world the right to judge whether you and I are born-again Christians on the basis of our observable love toward all Christians."

Francis A. Schaeffer. *The Mark of the Christian* (IVP Classics) (Kindle Locations 104-105). Kindle Edition.

“But after we have done our best to communicate to a lost world, still we must never forget that the final apologetic which Jesus gives is the observable love of true Christians for true Christians.”

Francis A. Schaeffer. *The Mark of the Christian* (IVP Classics) (Kindle Locations 154-155). Kindle Edition.

We are sent in love

John 20:19-22

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

to love all kinds of people

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.”

with a message of God’s love

Luke 24:46-48

⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

empowered by the Spirit who pours out His love

Acts 1:8

The Ascension

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

• Women's Ministry Discussion

In his book *Our Guilty Silence*, John Stott brilliantly articulates the centrality of the church's role in mission:

The invisibility of God is a great problem. It was already a problem to God's people in Old Testament days. Their pagan neighbours would taunt them, saying, "Where now is your god?" Their gods were visible and tangible, but Israel's God was neither. Today in our scientific culture young people are taught not to believe in anything which is not open to empirical investigation. How then has God solved the problem of his own invisibility? The first answer is of course "in Christ." Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. "No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son has made him known" (John 1:18). "That's wonderful," people say, "but it was 2,000 years ago. Is there no way by which the invisible God makes himself visible today?" There is. "No one has ever seen God" (1 John 4:12). It is precisely the same introductory statement. But instead of continuing with reference to the Son of God, John continues: "if we love one another, God dwells in us." In other words, the invisible God, who once made

himself visible in Christ, now makes himself visible in Christians, if we love one another. It is a breathtaking claim. The local church cannot evangelize, proclaiming the gospel of love, if it is not itself a community of love.

Prayer of Confession:

O Lord God, eternal and almighty Father, we confess and acknowledge sincerely before your holy majesty that we are poor sinners, conceived and born in iniquity and corruption, prone to do evil, incapable of any good as you measure goodness in light of Christ, and that in our depravity we transgress your holy commandments without end or ceasing. We have purchased for ourselves, through your righteous judgment, our ruin and condemnation. Nevertheless, O Lord, we are grieved that we have offended you; and we condemn ourselves and our sins with true repentance, asking for your grace to relieve our distress. O God and Father most gracious and full of compassion, have mercy on us in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And as you blot out our sins and stains because of Christ, magnify and increase in us day by day the grace of the Holy Spirit; that as we acknowledge our unrighteousness with

all our heart, we may be moved by that sorrow which shall bring forth true repentance in us and producing in us the fruits of righteousness and love which are pleasing to you. We ask that you do all this through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.