



LIFE AS MISSION
Hindrances to the Mission
Week 8

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Chris Suitt and New Hope Church.

Closing prayer

Introduction:

We're in the 8th week of our series Life as Mission where we've been looking at mission of making known and clear the significance

and meaning of the life, death and resurrection Jesus gave He gave to His church worldwide, including our local congregation.

Each week we've been covering various aspects of that mission and today we take our cue from the Apostle Paul who wrote:

2 Corinthians 6:3

³ We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,

In other words, let's not put any hindrance in the way of anyone hearing the truth of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, what is called the gospel.

So, today we'll be looking at three hindrances to the mission of making the gospel known.

When it comes to hindrances of making Christ known, I would say, for those of us who are Christians, one thing we have, two things we lack. Now, what do I mean by that? The one

thing we have that hinders the gospel is fear. And the two things we lack that hinder the gospel are love and intentionality.

Let's begin with fear. What are we afraid of?

1. Fear of man hinders the gospel.

This point is drawn from Luke chapter 12, so we'll go there now.

Luke 12:8-9

8 “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, ⁹ but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

- Verse in context of the gospel

Romans 10:9

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that

God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

You are not saved because you confess Jesus is Lord. You confess Jesus is Lord when God in His mercy brings you to that place where you believe in your heart that He died for all your sins and that He rose from the dead to demonstrate His authority to forgive your sins. You are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone not by anything you do. But once you believe you confess what's in your heart.

That's the theological context of Luke 12, but the point of Luke 12 is that we simply fear the wrong people.

We fear what people might think of us. We fear what people might say about us. We fear how people might react. We fear being rejected by people. We have lots of fears about people, but the one fear that should override all the others is fear of being left out of the celebration.

I don't mean fear that you won't go to heaven. I mean the fear that when God celebrates the works of His children at the Judgment Seat of Christ that you'll have nothing to celebrate in fulfilling the mission of the gospel.

2 Corinthians 5:10

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Courage is when you feel the fear, but understand that in reality you have nothing to fear and so move forward, pushing through your emotional fear based upon your confidence in the gospel.

2 Timothy 1:7-8

⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord,

You do not have to be afraid because you don't have a spirit of fear. You have a spirit of power and love. And self-control, which means you can push through fear when it rears its head.

The question is: Are you embarrassed to be seen with Jesus? Because you don't have to be.

- Last night I went to a Masterclass at CATs with my oldest daughter Eden. The class was taught by Eden Espinoza who played

Elphaba for the Broadway production of the musical *Wicked*.

- There was this timid teenage girl with a beautiful voice who was tightening her throat on some high notes. The teenager confessed her lack of confidence and Eden Espinoza said, “The fact that you’re in front of us shows us all you have the confidence.”
- Then Espinoza took the young girl’s hand and turned with her so both of their backs were toward the crowd. She gave her some pointers on how not to strain her voice and

without letting go of her hand, they sang together. And right before us, the teenager reached the vocal heights in a new way.

It's what God says to us when we say, "I'm too fearful to say anything to anyone." "Just the fact that you're my child — and to be my child you have to have been born again and if you've been born again you have the Holy Spirit within in — so just the fact that you're my child tells you that you do not have a Spirit of fear... but of power and love and self-

control. I have every confidence that you can share the gospel with people.”

God saying He has confidence in you sounds blasphemous to many of you. Well, do you believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God? Listen to what the Apostle Paul said to that ragtag group of messy Christians known as the Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 7:16

¹⁶ I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

2 Timothy 1:8-12

⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling,

What is this holy calling? Isn't making Christ known, isn't the Great Commission a holy calling? You better believe it is.

not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

Christ has brought to light this news, this truth about how fear of death can truly be eliminated. Have you ever feared death? Did you get over that fear? How? How did you overcome your fear of death?

¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher,

Was only Paul appointed to make the gospel of Jesus Christ known? Was it just Paul and then pastors? A thousand times no! Every Christian is called to this holy calling.

12 which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed,

My guess is that's how most of us conquered our fear of death — we know in whom we have believed. We believe that Jesus Christ conquered death for us. He removed the sting of death. We have confidence inside that this is reality. It is true for us because He did it.

Do you know whom you have believed?
Because that is the key to overcoming your
fear of man, too.

**and I am convinced that he is able to guard
until that day what has been entrusted to me.**

If God has entrusted so many days on this
earth to you, He is able to guard that trust.
What can man do to you?

I'm reminded of Angela and Greg Stogner's
four-year old grandson who when he was told

by his father that God's love for him is so much more greater than his own, the little boy replied with, "That's means His punishment is greater too."

2 Corinthians 5:11

¹¹ Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

We don't engage in evangelism because we're afraid of God. We engage in evangelism because we know God's judgment is to be feared by those who don't know Him.

Now, for the life of me, I don't know why that sentiment offends people, but it often does. I think it's simply perspective. If you know you have information that could save someone's life wouldn't you share it? Of course you would. Anyone would. That's the mindset of the Christian who shares the gospel. We don't

simply believe your life depends on it. We believe your eternal life depends on it.

2 Corinthians 5:14

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;

That's the second hindrance to the gospel:

2. Lack of love hinders the gospel.

“Too many Christians fail to be compassionate and Christ-like to others. Evangelism always ultimately includes a clear articulation of the gospel. But too many Christians never get that opportunity to share the gospel, because they fail to show Christ in their actions and compassion.” (Thom Rainer)

Something I learned while reading the book of Job, and I learned this from the bad arguments of his unwise friends, was that just because someone has a bad argument

doesn't mean we can dismiss everything they say. Too often we throw the baby out with the bathwater. If we don't agree with someone's perspective or worldview, we simply toss everything they say out the window. But when you read Job's friends, they say some incredibly stupid things and some incredibly true things.

All that to say, when Gandhi observed the Christian missionaries in his country, he told them about the "evangelism of the rose." He reminded them that a rose does not have to

preach. It simply spreads its fragrance, allowing people to respond as they will.

Now, this is a good sentiment with some biblical warrant but it needs to be biblically adjusted because the idea that we just live the gospel isn't the gospel. The gospel is a message that has to be articulated. But God help us that our presentation of the gospel is prefaced with loving actions prior to being spoken. Does your attitude enhance the gospel or does your life make the message stink?

Imagine going to your favorite restaurant (The Gambling Cowboy) and the waiter who comes to take your order hasn't showered in seven days. The food at the restaurant might be the best in world, but if your waiter stinks he's going to ruin your meal. The meal we're serving is the gospel. May our lives and attitudes not make it stink.

Finally...

3. Lack of intentionality hinders the gospel.

“The church should always seek to make certain any and all ministries include intentional efforts to share the gospel.”

If our excuse is that we don't know any nonChristians then we need to take intentional steps to meet some.

Luke 10:2

² And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

GOSPEL REMINDER: Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

GREAT COMMISSION ACTION STEP: Do something nice this week for an unbeliever you know and leave it at that — you simply did

something nice for him or her. No strings attached.