

## Mission Sunday

## I. Why Missions?

A. Our God is a sending God

1. The word “missions” is rooted in the Latin *mitto* (meaning “to send”). For the last two thousand years this term has “signified the sending of Jesus’ followers into his global harvest of all people.”<sup>1</sup> In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus establishes the authority, purpose, and hope of the churches missionary work. Here we read, “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
2. Contemporary perception of mission frequently boils down to established churches sending missionaries to foreign countries and inner cities, supported by those who stay. Too often it’s seen as the peripheral activity of a healthy domestic ministry, or a call given to few and followed by even fewer. Missionary activities are not meant to be a peripheral ministry of a healthy church. Rather, mission is at the heart of the church. The sending of the church into the world is sourced in the very character of God. Our God is a sending God. In John 21:21, Jesus tells us that as the “Father has sent me, even so I am sending you”. As the Father sent the son, and as the Father and Son sent the Spirit (John 14:15-17; 15:26), so too now the Father, Son, and Spirit send the church into the world to be a faithful presence and a prophetic witness to the King and His Kingdom.
3. When mission is at the heart of our ecclesiology, we see that all Christians are to participate in missions. We may not all be called to be cross-cultural missionaries, but we are called to participate in God’s

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<sup>1</sup> John Piper, and David Mathis, *Finish the Mission : Bringing the Gospel to the Unreached and Unengaged* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2012), 14.

work of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18). Author David Bosch writes, "... missionary activity is not so much the work of the church, as simply the church at work...Because God is a missionary God, God's people are missionary people."<sup>2</sup> Individually and collectively we are called to proclaim the Gospel both in word and deed. We are dispatched in our current locations, circumstances, and circles as much as we are to the rest of the world. Seen through the lens of a Kingdom-oriented ecclesiology, our very lives as His disciples are meant as acts of evangelism – we are not the people sending, but the people being sent.

4. "The church does not exist for itself, but for participation in God's mission of reconciliation." It is important that we "develop a kingdom-oriented ecclesiology...we need to develop a mission-shaped ecclesiology that takes seriously the kingdom of God and God's work in the world." We are called to be Kingdom people, not church people.
5. The Triune God is a loving, relational God who by nature desires to invite others into His perfect community. From the beginning of Creation He has sought to dwell among His people and gather people from every tongue, tribe, and nation to Himself. Therefore, missions is the cross-cultural in-breaking of God's redemptive work in the world through His people to herald the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven.

## II. What is the goal of missions?

### A. The universal worship of Jesus.

1. The goal of our missionary endeavors is the worship of Jesus Christ. Whatever form our missionary endeavors and our mercy ministries take, the heart of them is the global worship of Christ.
2. David Mathis—"Missions aims at, brings about, and is fueled by the worship of Jesus...What's at stake in missions is the universal honor of the Father in the global glory of His Son in the joy of all the peoples."

3. Psalm 67:1-5, “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!”
4. “Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more.” John Piper

### III. How do we carry out the mission?

- A. By making disciples through proclaiming the Good News in Word and Deed.
  1. At times this commission can appear daunting, especially in the face of a world actively rejecting God and His disciples, but we take hope in the victory of God, and the partnership of the Spirit. We are sent, but we aren’t sent alone. Our call to mission is a call to be faithful in word and deed to the King and the Kingdom. With discipleship as our goal, we are bolstered by the power of the Spirit, infused with the authority of Christ, and promised his unending presence. Fully equipped, regardless of how far away God leads, our lives can bear witness to Him in every aspect as we continue to be transformed by His redemption.
  2. At Rogue Valley Fellowship there are two clear pathways which assist disciples in participating in the mission of reconciliation—local mercy ministries and global missions. Participation at a local level takes place through the presence of mercy ministries. Mercy ministries are local para-church ministries which give us the opportunity to show love for our neighbors in very practical ways. By supporting and serving alongside these ministries we seek to bring the whole gospel to the

whole person. The second pathway to participate is through cross-cultural missions. Individuals have the opportunity to participate in cross-cultural missions through both short-term and long term mission opportunities. These opportunities seek to take the message of the gospel to people around the world (Acts 1:6-8) through the preaching of the Gospel and providing tangible help to those in need.

#### IV. What are the Core Values of Partnership?

- A. Faithful incarnational presence (long-term incarnational relationship).
- B. Contextualized prophetic witness (contextually speaking the good news of the gospel through the power of the Spirit).
- C. Local church focus (our desire is to come alongside indigenous Christ-followers in the establishment and/or growth of local church bodies).
- D. Human Flourishing (New Creation theology, which believes in the restoration of all creation, requires us to value holistic ministry).
- E. Long-term, intentional support (the value we are aiming for is quality over quantity and investing in fewer missionaries but with a greater amount of resources over a long period of time).

## **Bibliography**

Piper, John, and David Mathis. *Finish the Mission : Bringing the Gospel to the Unreached and Unengaged*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2012.