

## Missions Month



Part 4 - Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Over the past month or so we've been looking at God's heart for the world – all the nations of the world, all of the 17,000 ethnic people group on planet earth.

We saw that in Genesis chapter 11 God created the nations. His heart's desire is that one day representatives from all the ethnic people groups on earth will be gathered around His throne in heaven worshipping Jesus as Savior and Lord.

And all of history since creation to today and into the future is moving toward that glorious day that's described in the book of Revelation. It's something that King David wrote a song about almost a thousand years before the birth of Jesus. Part of that song has been our memory verse these past few weeks. Let's say it out loud together...

**(Slide)**

*"All the nations you have made will come and bow down before you, Lord,  
and will honor your name."*

Psalm 86:9

Even a thousand years before the coming of Jesus the Messiah David understood God's heart for the nations. David knew that because he had the Old Testament that taught him that.

David had the words of Genesis 12 that guided his understanding – just like we do today. The first 3 verses of chapter 12 are three of the most important verses in the Bible because they describe what the rest of the Bible is all about...

(Slide)

*"The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. [2] "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Genesis 12:1-3

God told Abraham that He wanted to bless Him and use Him and His descendants to be a blessing to all the nations of the world. Now notice, in those verses, are the words love, heart, or passion used to describe how God feels about the nations of the world? No, they're not.

But as we've seen in our first 3 studies, all the throughout both the Old and New Testaments God keeps bringing us back to the fact that He DOES love, and have a heart and a passion for, all the people groups of the world.

Now, the key point in helping us today in applying this study to our lives is the understanding that just because we're not Jews doesn't mean that God doesn't want to use us in the same way He used Abraham and his descendants.

The Apostle Paul in Galatians chapter 3 points the way for us. Just as Genesis 12:1-3 in the Old Testament are key verses in understanding God's heart for the world and His plans for them, so these are in the New Testament...

(Slide)

*"The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

Galatians 3:8-9, 28-29

We're told here that if you have placed your faith in Christ for salvation, then you are "in" Christ and you are likewise, spiritually, in Abraham's family of faith.

And since Abraham and his family were blessed by God and were charged with blessing the nations of the world, so we TOO as followers of Christ, as His church, we have the same charge – we have the same responsibility.

In other words, as Christians, WE ARE IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS!!! As Christians we have been blessed by God, just as Abraham, our family patriarch was blessed.

We are his spiritual descendants and we have the same responsibility as he and his physical descendants did, in sharing God's blessings with all the other nations and peoples of the world.

That brings us back to that recurring activity of God that we see from Genesis thru Revelation...

(slide)

### **The Recurring Activity of God's Plan:**

God blesses His people

God gives them the responsibility to bless others

The Result: God receives the glory and His plan is fulfilled

**BLESS: To be “blessed” in Scripture means we’ve been given the privileged responsibility of being part of God’s family and inviting others to join us.**

Once you understand God’s Plan – His heart for the nations - and His recurring activity in the world to gather worshipers from all the people groups to join together in worshipping Him in heaven one day...

Then your eyes are opened and you begin to see it over and over in the Scriptures. For example, look at Psalm 67 (READ & EXPLAIN).

These first two verses of Psalm 67 are our memory verses for this week, let’s say them together...

(Slide)

*“May God be gracious to us and bless us; may he make his face shine upon us so that your way may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.”*

Psalm 67:1-2

Let’s see if we can personalize what we’re learning from Scripture, so say this after me,

Our nation has been blessed, to be a blessing to others...  
Our church has been blessed, to be a blessing to others...  
My family has been blessed, to be a blessing to others...  
I have been blessed, to be a blessing to others...  
All for the glory of God!

Last Sunday we clearly saw the mission of God reflected in some of the last words of Jesus before His ascension in Matthew 28:  
“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 obey everything I have commanded you.”

Jesus clarified those orders for the early believers and for us in Acts 1:8...  
(TURN & READ).

From this verse, we can break our mission down into 4 equal parts:

**God’s Mission For the Church:**

**(SLIDE) 1. God blesses His people to strengthen the church.**

If we are ever going to be a channel or a funnel of blessing to every people group in the world, we as a church must be strengthened first. Here’s what that looks like for us as a church...

Every Sunday caring adults serve in our early childhood classes nurturing those little ones, loving on them, teaching them elementary truths about God and about the Bible. That’s the beginning of strengthening our church.

Every Sunday caring adults in our Fellowship Children's Ministry meet with our grade-school children, interacting with them, praying them, and teaching and leading them in learning what God has to say in His Word. That's a part of strengthening our church.

On Wednesday nights, almost 30 adults serve in our AWANA ministry where children are challenged to memorize the Bible, they're challenged to bring their friends to Christ and they're challenged to serve Jesus Christ. That's part of strengthening our church.

Also on Wednesday nights our Junior High Ministry teaches our young people what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. And on Sunday night our Sr. High young people are learning what it means to follow Jesus in discipleship.

All throughout the week small groups of adults are meeting together in Growth Groups. Some right now are learning how to handle their finances biblically,

Others are learning how to apply the truths of what we're learning about Christ's mission here on Sundays. Others are learning other aspect of God's Word and together we're all learning how to grow in our love for another as brothers and sisters in Christ. That's part of strengthening our church.

I have to say that if you're not in a Growth Group then you're missing out on these important aspects of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

I have no idea how you practice the commands of Scripture in regards to discipleship or the one others God has clearly told us to practice in the body of Christ if you not in regular fellowship with other believers in our church family.

My prayer is that all of us will come to seriously practice what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in the beautiful family of God here that we call Fellowship Church.

Now I could go on and on, but the point is this: the stronger our church becomes as our members are mobilized in discipleship and service, as all of us are growing in our walk with Jesus Christ, the greater the impact we can have in being a blessing to the peoples of the world.

This is the first part of the mission: God's blessings on us here at home for the purpose of strengthening our church. Now, I want to make a point that I don't want you to miss...

Strengthening the church is an on-going process. There isn't a certain threshold that we must reach in order for us to be able to be a blessing beyond Norwalk.

So as we move on to the next 3 equal parts of this mission please don't think that we as a church have to reach a certain level of strength before we move on. But also remember this, the stronger we are, the more mature we can become in our faith...

The more efficient we can be in our ministries, the wiser we become in our stewardship of God's resources in our personal lives and corporately as a church - - - the greater the impact we can have in the world as we move out in our God-given mission.

**(Slide) 2. The church's responsibility includes blessing our own people group.**

Our impact of the world begins right here in our "Jerusalem" among our own people group. Jesus said that He wants to be both salt and light in our own culture.

And when we do, we bring seasoning to our culture and we light up our own culture by the way we live and by the way we serve people around us who are not yet in the family of God. Another word for this is evangelism.

**Evangelism = Sharing the gospel with others in our own culture**

Evangelism is a lifestyle that we practice every day and in every way that we live our lives in our neighborhoods, our community lives, at work, on the soccer fields, in the coffee houses, in our involvement with our children at school, in every aspect of daily living.

As we live our faith out, God is going to give us natural opportunities to share the gospel with people. We need to take advantage of those God-given opportunities and in fact expect them and watch for them as God leads.



Not only can we evangelize on a personal level, we can evangelize on a corporate level. When we our church organizes services and events for the purpose of evangelism we can work with our church family to share the Gospel.

There are lots of examples of this, but a natural opportunity for all of us is Easter. That's why we're spending 40 days in prayer and fasting before Easter, to seek God in using us to be a blessing to others around us by praying for them and inviting them to join us at Easter.

I'll share more on this in the next few weeks.

**So again, what does it mean to evangelize? It means sharing the gospel with others in our own culture. Why should we evangelize? So that together we can mobilize for...**

**Missions = Sharing the gospel with other people groups so that the Great Commission is fulfilled.**

Evangelizing our own culture isn't JUST about doing our part to make sure that as of our own people group as possible are saved from suffering in hell forever. That is certainly one purpose for evangelism and a very motivating one.

But now that we know that, we also know that another, equally important, purpose for reaching out to our friends and relatives and even people we don't know...

It's so that there will be more of us to work together to get the gospel to those people groups who DON'T yet know about Jesus Christ and DON'T yet have a church or church planting movement in their culture.

Remember, the end result of God's plan and His heart for the world is that ALL NATIONS might be reached and discipled.

So God's Mission begins by receiving His blessings for the purpose of strengthening the church. It at the same time involves being a blessing – that is – reaching out to our own people group.

And at the same time it includes two more equal parts...

**(Slide) 3. The church's responsibility includes blessing reached people groups.**

**(Slide) 4. The church's responsibility includes blessing unreached people groups.**

**(Slide) 5. God's mission for the church must be our mission and must be integrated into everything that we do.**

Quite frankly, this is our challenge as a church. How does God want us to integrate HIS Mission into everything we do as a church? Let me make a bold statement:...

I believe we would be out of God's will if we didn't do our best as a church to structure everything we do in order to fulfill the mission of blessing our own people group, while at the same time blessing reached people groups, and at the same time being a blessing to the unreached people groups.

Let me close with a statement that I believe sums up everything we've talked about so far...

**(On Slide) The Mission: God wants us to bless Norwalk so we can bless the world!!!**

[Youtube Video: "Risk It All – David Platt" \(2:27\)](#)