

The Mission – Share The Good News of Jesus

April 17, 2016 - Pastor Randy Eliason

Imagine that you were a Dr. who one day made a startling discovery. You find a disease that has infected 100% of the human race and you discover that the disease is 100% fatal! You work tirelessly to find a cure and when you do, you test the antidote on yourself and it works. You're cured! "Now what do you do? You know of a disease that affects 100% of the people in the world. You know it is 100% fatal. You have discovered the cure, and you know it works. The question then arises, "Now what do you do? You would do everything possible to get this medicine to everyone. (The above illustration is adapted from an article by Timothy K. Beougher in the Southern Baptist Theological Journal, Spring 2001)

Matthew 28:19-20

Over the past two weeks we have learned that the great mission, or the great mandate for the church is to go and make disciples of Jesus; to go and make followers of Jesus.

We learned that following begins with faith: A faith marked by water baptism. The beginning of the discipleship journey is baptism. Baptism was designed by Jesus to be the means by which people who have come to faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior depict that they have been born-again; that they have died to their sins and have been raised to new life by the Spirit as a result of their faith in Jesus death and resurrection.

We learned that after baptism the would-be follower must continue to learn more about the God who is now their father. Disciples must learn to know more about this Jesus who is their savior and Lord. They need to learn what God's will is for their lives and how they can glorify him in gratitude for what He has done for them and as a recognition that He is the King who deserves all honor and glory.

We learned that the disciples must not just learn to know; followers must put what they learn into practice. Followers learn in order to live a transformed life.

Today I am wrapping this series up by focusing on the third key word in our mission statement: SHARE. Followers of Jesus learn so that they can live... and SHARE.

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Jesus tells his disciples, His followers, to go and make disciples. Remember, Jesus is speaking to His disciples, his followers. Therefore, Jesus made disciples.

Disciples are people who learn to obey, or learn to follow the life and teachings of Jesus. Therefore, Jesus' disciples ought to be people who disciple others.

It is rather amazing that something which should be so obvious – that being a follower of Jesus entails sharing Jesus with others so that they might come to faith and become followers – seems to be ignored by so many Christians.

The sermon intro video said it all. Good news is meant to be shared

Let me give you three simple reasons that should compel us to share the good news of Jesus.

1. The Character of God/Christ – We could make a case for outreach and missions without one direct command from scripture. We could make the case strictly from the nature and character of God himself. Our triune God, the one we claim as our father, our Lord, and Savior, is the first & ultimate missionary. He is an outgoing, outreaching God. He has come for us. We did not seek him, he sought us.

In the OT, it is God who seeks out Adam and Eve when they are hiding from him. It is God who comes to Moses and tells him I have seen the distress of my people and heard their cries and I have come down to deliver them. It is God who says, "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself."

In John's gospel alone there are 42 references to Jesus being sent by the Father. Jesus said, "I have come to seek and to save the lost". Jesus was constantly taking the initiative with people like Zaccheus, and the Samaritan women at the well. Jesus said to the disciples, "As the father sent me, I am sending you".

The Father sacrificially sent Jesus TO US so that Jesus might sacrificially spend His life FOR US in order that the Spirit could be sent to dwell IN US!

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2. The Command of Christ – Matt. 28:19,20

Although, the character of God is sufficient grounds for us to base our mission to share the good news of Jesus, we do have the specific command of Christ. Jesus, our Lord commands us to go...so we set up a committee to study the command and discuss whether or not to obey. NO! He said it, so we do it.

3. The Content of the Gospel –

Romans 10:13-15 provides us with very simple logic. “For Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?”

The good news is that Jesus has come to rescue us from the power and penalty of our sin and give us eternal life in a completely restored creation. Everyone who calls on Jesus to save them will be saved!

However, in order for this good news to be good news for you, you had to believe in Jesus, and in order for you to believe it, someone had to share this good news with you. Jesus is not “A” way to the father, He is “the” way to the father. The definite article means a lot.

The necessity and urgency of sharing the gospel is expressed no where more clearly than in Peter’s words in Acts 4. “There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.” Good news is meant to be shared. Since there is eternal life to gain and eternal torment to shun, then this gospel must be shared!!

Here are some reasons why we neglect to share the good news:

We fear rejection

The reality is that not everyone perceives the good news that we have to be good news. We fear rejection. Here is the irony. Most of Jesus original disciples were killed for proclaiming this good news! What?!!? Why would they be killed for sharing something good? Within the context of the good news is some uncomfortable

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news, some news that will hurt our pride. The good news that a savior has come, implies that you need saving. The good news that “Jesus is Lord” implies that He, rather than you, needs to be Lord! Remember that even though many will reject our message, it is worth the risk. Don’t assume they will reject the message.

We have been shamed into silence

We have bought into the lie of our culture that we should “live and let live.” In our pluralistic, postmodern society, we can easily be influenced by the prevailing ethos that considers attempting to convert someone to your belief system as inappropriate, disrespectful, and even unethical. We have let the world, rather than Jesus, define what it means to love people. It doesn’t mean leaving them alone.

What it does require is that we reach out in a way that demonstrates respect and love. We don’t yell at people. Look at how Jesus reached out. He engaged the immoral Samaritan women at the well in conversation. He valued her. He offered to go to Zaccheus’ house. He didn’t yell at him, “Come down from that tree and repent”. Zaccheus had a reputation as a sinner. Faithful followers of God did not go to the house of faithless sinners like Zaccheus. But Jesus did... and in doing so He demonstrated that He valued Zaccheus and Zaccheus turned away from his sin.

Think back to my opening illustration. It is obvious that you need to share this life-saving medicine, but you can’t force it on people. You are going to have to persuade them that they both have the disease and that your cure is effective. *You are going to have to build trust* before people will accept your diagnosis and cure.

We have allowed ourselves to become distracted

If the devil can’t destroy our lives by enticing us to sin or leading us away from the truth, he will distract us with 1,001 trivial pursuits.

We feel inadequate/ ill-equipped

First of all, if you are not well equipped, then learn. Second, remember that we plant and water the seed but God causes the growth. Begin by sincerely sharing your

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story. The best way to become better equipped at sharing the gospel is through practice. Just do it!

We go as missionaries because, as children of the greatest missionary, we carry His DNA. We also go because we live under His Lordship. Lastly we go because people need what we have. God has divine appointments for us to that we need to be ready to seize. He places us in the path of people that he wants us to reach out to.