

**The Mission**  
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Our church theme for this year is Knowing God and Making Him Known. That's why we exist as a church – to know God ourselves and to make Him known to others. That's also your purpose in life – to know God and to make Him known to others. It's another way to say our church vision statement – Touching Heaven - Changing Earth!

Some people focus on knowing God and some people focus on making Him known – but we want to focus on both! We want to take as many people as we can from earth to heaven – but we also want to bring as much heaven as we can to earth!

What do I mean by that?

- Is sickness allowed in heaven? No!  
So on earth we should lay hands on the sick and pray for healing.
- Are demons allowed in heaven? No! They got kicked out of heaven.  
So whenever we come into contact with evil spirits, we should kick them out and set captives free!
- Is poverty allowed in heaven? No! People there live in mansions and walk around on streets paved with gold!  
So we should work to overcome poverty on earth.
- Is racism allowed in heaven? NO! Heaven is composed of people from every tribe, every nation, every tongue.  
So we should not tolerate racism on earth.
- Are there any unbelievers in heaven? NO!
- So we should do everything we can so that people end up in heaven and not in hell.

We just finished up preaching for months on Knowing God – now we are transitioning into Making Him Known.

Today – I'm preaching a sermon entitled The Mission.

Jesus came to earth on a mission from God.  
 His mission was to seek and to save those who are lost.  
 His mission was to destroy the works of the devil.  
 His mission was to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth.  
 And when He left earth – He passed that mission on to us!

## 1- **You were made for a mission in the world.**

In John 17:18, Jesus prayed this for His followers, which includes you:

*In the same way that You gave Me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world.*

I know we all have individual callings and missions from God, but today we're going to look at the common mission that we all share. In John 20:21, Jesus said,

*As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.*

The Wuest Translation says-

*Even as the Father has sent Me on a mission for which I still am responsible, I also am sending you.*

Now, what are we being sent to do? What is our mission? Well, Paul is real specific in Acts 20:24

*The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work the Lord Jesus gave me - to tell people the good news about God's grace.*

That mission is your mission – to share the good news. There's a word for this – "evangelism." Evangelism is the Greek word for "good news." Good news is the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that once I know the Good News, God wants me to pass it on to others. It's not enough to know the good news – we must share it with others. That's evangelism.

Now – let me share what this meant to the first century church. In the first-century Roman world, "good news" was used to describe the announcement that a new emperor had taken the throne. Messengers would be sent throughout the Roman Empire to announce this good news. Their message was, "We have good news. There is a new emperor. His name is Tiberius Caesar, so adjust your life and bow your knee."

The Roman emperor was also called "Savior" and "Lord" and it was believed that he would establish "peace" in the Empire. In addition, the Roman emperor was expected to bring justice, peace, prosperity, and blessings to the world. He was also called "Pontifex Maximus" which means "chief priest." The Romans believed that when an emperor ascended into heaven, he was enthroned as being divine. Thus the emperor (at his death) was also called "son of God."

That's why Rome was so upset about the early church declaring the good news that Jesus was now the Lord and Savior of the world.

He is the Chief Priest, the Son of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and that everyone should bow their knee to Him! This was an insult to the Roman hierarchy, especially Caesar. And it got the early church in trouble.

Here's what happened when the good news was preached in Thessalonica according to Acts 17:6-7. People got upset and dragged the believers to the authorities and said:

*These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.*

The New Living Translation says:

*They are all guilty of treason against Caesar, for they profess allegiance to another king, named Jesus.*

This is why people get upset when we share the good news today. We are telling them that the kingdom of God is here – that Jesus is the King – and that they should repent of their sins and living for themselves and bow their knee to Jesus Christ.

This is why people get upset when we say that Jesus Christ is the way the truth and the life.

They want to go their own way.

They want to make up their own so-called truth.

They want to live life like they want.

They don't want to bow their knees to anyone but themselves!

But God has chosen us to share the good news with them! So, where are we supposed to share this good news? Jesus said in Acts 1:8

*You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

When Jesus told this to his followers, they were in Jerusalem. So here's the point: the starting place is at home - with the people closest to you, right there in your own community, your neighbors, your friends, your family.

Then he says I want you to go to Judea and Samaria, that's like the county next door, and Samaritans happen to be different culturally and different racially. So He said, "I want you to go to people who are nearby, but who are different from you."

Then He says, "I want you to go to the ends of the earth. I want you to go reach everybody else."

Notice he doesn't say, "You will be my defense attorney." Or, "You will be my prosecutor." Or, "You will be my salesman."

You don't have to defend God.

You don't have to prosecute sinners.

You don't have to be a salesman for God.

All God wants you to do be a witness.

It is not even your responsibility to save anyone else. Only God can do that. Our job is simply to be a witness.

What is a witness? A witness is somebody who just tells what they have personally seen or experienced. A witness tells what happened to them.

Nobody can be a better witness of what God has done in your life than you.

So God says, "I just want you to tell other people what's happened in your life."

Why does God want us to share the Good News? Because God wants a family. The whole point of history is God is building a family that's going to live with Him forever and love Him. Ephesians 3:11 says:

*This was God's plan for all of history which He carried out through Christ Jesus, our Lord.*

Here's the amazing part: God has chosen us to complete the mission. Jesus Christ started this mission when He came to earth and now He says, "I want you guys to finish it." God puts the future of the world in our hands.

I heard this story someone made up to illustrate this. It's about Jesus ascending to heaven after His resurrection. After the angels worshipped Him for a while, one of them went up to Him and asked, "What's your plan to share your truth with the world?"

Jesus answered, "My plan is for my disciples to take the Good News to the entire world." "Your disciples?" the angel asked. "That ragtag bunch of misfits who didn't understand most of what you said, who fought over who would be the greatest, who all ran & hid after your crucifixion – those disciples?" "Those disciples," Jesus answered.

And then the angel asks, "So, what is plan B?" Jesus said, "There is no plan B." Church, there still is no Plan B - we're it. We have the greatest mission ever given to mankind: taking the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world.

So, what do we do to complete the mission God has given us?

**2- To complete your God-given mission, you must share the good news with those in your world. That's the starting point.**

Luke 8 tells about a demon-possessed man who was set free by Jesus.  
 Luke 8:38-39 says:

*The man who had been freed from the demons begged to go with him. But Jesus sent him home, saying, "No, go back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for you." So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things Jesus had done for him.*

Jesus says the same thing to you. Your mission starts right at home, in your own neighborhood. God wants you to go to your friends, your family, your coworkers, your neighbors and share the Good News with the people in your Jerusalem.

When people tell me they are interested in being a foreign missionary, I always ask them questions like:

Are you sharing your faith now in the United States?

If not – what makes you think you will share the gospel in a foreign country when you aren't sharing it at home?

Are you sacrificially giving to the church and missions now? If not, how will you sacrifice to live in a foreign country if you can't sacrificially give here and now?

The starting place is at home! God wants to use you to share the good news of His kingdom and there are opportunities all around you in your home, in your Jerusalem. They are staring you in the face every single day. You just have to be ready for them. Right now, each one of us can begin by looking around for people who need Jesus.

Here's how each of us can begin intentionally reaching out. By reaching out to the ones closest to you. The closer you are to someone, the more they trust you. This is called friendship evangelism. Friendship evangelism was one of the main ways the gospel spread in the New Testament. There was no radio, TV, Christian bookstores, bumper stickers for your chariot. Instead, there was Andrew bringing Peter to Christ and Phillip bringing Nathaniel to Christ.

Who's in your Circles of Influence?

Family

Friends

School

Work

Neighborhood

Leisure – Golf, Gym, sports

Identify the people you can reach and pray for opportunities to reach out to them. If somebody hadn't shared the Good News with you, you'd be lost. So God wants you to pass it on. God wants all of your relatives, all of your friends and all the people you love and all the people you don't know, He wants them all to know Him. We have the best news in the world – but it's no news unless we share it. So, you were made for a mission.

First, you must share with those in your world. But that's not enough. It is not enough to just care about the people who are around you.

**3- To complete your God-given mission, you must dare to reach beyond your world.**

Love demands I move beyond my comfort zone to people with different backgrounds, different languages, different cultures. I Corinthians 9:22 says:

*Whatever each person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.*

In other words, I just don't just try to reach people like me. Christians are called to build bridges, not walls. And repeatedly in the Bible, we're told to reach out to others. God expects us to make the first move.

I must dare to reach beyond my world. Galatians 6:2 says:

*Stoop down and reach out to those who were oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law.*

Now, you don't have to leave the metroplex to do this. It is within 20 minutes. God says our love is proved by our actions. James 1:27 says:

*Real religion, the kind that passes muster before God the Father, is this: reach out to the homeless and the loveless in their plight.*

When you read about Jesus, you see Jesus always rooted for the underdogs that people wanted to ignore; the poor, the imprisoned, the orphaned, the widowed, the aged, the social outcasts, the lepers. He wants us to reach out to those same people today.

Now here at GFC we have members who are reaching beyond themselves. They are not just telling their friends, they are reaching out to people who are different from themselves to show God's love to the needy. Over the years we've been involved in things like:

Giving money and gifts to families in need through Angel Tree at Christmas time.  
Distributing food to people in need.  
Sending our members on short-term and long-term mission's trips.

Now, I'm not going to kid you, if you get involved in your mission in the world, it is going to cost you. It is going to break you out of self-centeredness and your comfort zone, and it is going to cost you time and energy and effort and money; but God has promised eternal rewards.

Mark 10:29 says:

*Jesus replied, 'Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything for love of Me and to tell others the Good News' – that's the mission – "who won't be given back a hundred times over.'*

Now, God does not lie and He says, Whatever you do for Me is not in vain.

It is not enough to just share with those in my world.

It is not even enough to reach beyond my world.

If I am going to be like Jesus Christ, I must care about the whole world.

#### **4- To complete your God-given mission, you must go to the whole world.**

In Mark 16:15 - Jesus said to His followers,

*'Go everywhere in the world and tell the Good News to everyone.'*

Now, I want you to notice a couple things about that verse.

Was Jesus talking to pastors there? No.

Was he talking to missionaries there? No.

He's talking to just normal followers.

If you're a Christian, Jesus said, "Follow Me, and I'll make you a fisher of men."

If you're not fishing, you're not following.

He says to all His followers, go everywhere, because everybody needs to hear the Good News. Now I know you cannot go to the whole world by yourself. But you can change the world by going, giving and praying. Now, not all of us can go. But all can pray and all can give. You may think you don't have much to give, but if you give \$1 and someone else gives \$5 and someone else gives \$50 – it adds up.

Do you want to stop just existing and really start living? Mark 8:35 says:

*If you insist on saving your life, you will lose it. Only those who throw their lives away for My sake and the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live.*

Fulfilling your mission is the secret of a fulfilled life.

I want to ask you a question: Is anybody going to be in heaven because of you?

When you get to heaven, is anybody going to say thank you for telling me the Good News? Acts 13:36 says:

*David served God's purpose in his own generation.*

That's my prayer for you - that you will serve God's purpose in your generation.

What is more important than doing what God put you on earth to do?

Here's the test to know if you have completed your mission or not.  
Are you still alive?  
If you're still alive, your mission is not completed.

Our mission is found in the Great Commission where Jesus commanded us to go and make disciples.

In fact, over and over again God says it in one word: "Go."  
You can't spell "God" without "go."  
You can't spell "Good News" without "go."  
You can't spell "Gospel" without "go."  
You have to go!

We are on a mission from God and in order to complete our mission – the whole church must take the whole gospel to the whole world.

There are people that only you can reach!  
And when we all do our part - that's how we touch heaven and change earth!

So as we close, you've got four possible responses.  
You can say like Moses, "Who me?"  
Or you can say like Jonah, "Not me."  
Or you can say it like Habakkuk, "Why me?"  
Or you can say like Isaiah, "Here I am. Send me!!!"