

Made for Missions
Pastor Joe Oakley
GFC – 2-27-22

We're in a series called Forward in Faith. In this series we are using the word FORWARD as our outline. Follow – Obey – Reach – Worship – Abide – Resist – Disciple

We began by talking about what it means to follow Christ. Then we spoke on the O in Forward by teaching on obedience. Last week we spoke on the first R in Forward in a sermon called Reach.

Our text is the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 which says:

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

The word commission has several meanings.

It means an authoritative command or order to do something.

It means to send on a mission.

It also means to give the power and authority to carry out the mission.

So Jesus commissioned every believer to make disciples. In other words, our mission is to make disciples. As we've seen, making disciples means to teach new believers the Word of God and help them mature in their faith and become like Jesus.

Today I want to talk about 5 ministries we all can do to fulfill our mission from God in a sermon entitled Made for Missions. God's purpose of your life is far greater than your happiness or your personal fulfillment. It is far greater than your dreams, ambitions or success. You were made by God and for God and until you understand that, life doesn't make sense. You must find your purpose in life in God. Proverbs 16:4 says:

The Lord has made everything for His own purposes.

You were made by God for God. You were made for missions and put on the earth to fulfill the purposes of God. No matter how much success you may have in other things – if you miss God's eternal purposes, you miss the point of life.

1- You are wired to worship.

You were planned for God's pleasure and God's glory.

Our first purpose and our highest priority in life is to worship God. The primary purpose of your life is to glorify God in everything. The Bible says in Hebrews 2:10

God is the one who made all things and all things are for His glory. He wanted to have many children share His glory.

By the way - God created us to worship – so everybody worships. The question is not *IF* you worship – the question is who or what you worship. You were wired to worship by God and if you don't worship God, believe me, you're going to find a substitute real quick, even if it is just yourself.

I'm not going to say a lot about worship today because I'll be preaching on it in a couple of weeks. Today I just want to define worship, your very first purpose. Romans 12:1 says:

Because of God's great mercy to us, offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to His service and pleasing to Him. This is the true worship that you should offer.

Notice it says "*because,*" because of His mercy, because of His love for us, then we worship Him back. This shows us that worship is my response to God's love. Worship is love expressed. Worship starts in the heart and then it expresses that love in actions. And the way we express that love is by giving to God. We worship when we give God thanksgiving and praise, when we give our time and our money, when we give ourselves completely to Him.

Whenever you give back to God, whenever you offer anything to God, that's called worship. And that brings pleasure to God. You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. The essence of love is giving. The essence of worship is giving. So when you say, "God, I want to express my love to You," you say, "I give You my heart. I give you my life." That's the greatest way to express your love to God. Romans 6:13 says:

Give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life.

Let me ask you, what are you worshipping? I'll tell you what it is. It is whatever you give yourself to - your primary attention, your primary affection, and whatever you give your primary abilities to. In that case, some of you worship your career - you're living for that job. Some of you are worshipping making money. Some of you are worshipping pleasure. Some of you are worshipping another person who so dominates your life -- your total attention, affection and ability goes to that person.

The greatest temptation of life is to worship something other than God.

Whenever you love something more than God, you're going to have chaos, conflict, stress and problems in your life. Always. But, the amazing thing is this: if we focus our attention and we express our affection and we use our abilities for the one who made us, God says, "I'll take care of everything else. You don't have to worry about it. I will take care of it all." You were wired for worship, and...

2- You were formed for family.

Your own family – but not just your family. Also for God's family. The Bible word for that is "fellowship." Fellowship is expressing love for God's family. The entire Bible is the story of God building a family. That's why we're here. God wanted children. Ephesians 1:5 says:

God's unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ.

So once we understand God's first purpose for our life - getting to know and love God, then we can begin to focus on His second purpose for our lives, which is found in I Peter 2:17:

Love the family of believers.

God wants us to love others because He is love. We represent Him on earth and people see His love by the way we love one another.

Some of us grew up in homes that didn't have a lot of love. And, honestly, we don't know how to love. So we have to be taught, and the church (the family of God) is where we learn to love real people, not perfect people. Nobody in the church is perfect – I'm not and neither are you. We each have to learn to love - that's what God put us on earth to do. I John 4:21 says:

Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

Now, how do you do that? Well, fortunately, the Bible gives us crystal clear instructions. 1 Timothy 3:14-15 says:

I want you to know how people who are members of God's family must live. God's family is the church of the living God.

You know how we say - "Well, I'm going to go to church," as if church is just a place you go to. Technically, Church is not just a place you go to. Church is a family you belong to and fellowship with. The church is not a building; it is not a service; it is not an institution; it is not an organization; it is not a club. It is a family. And it is impossible to fulfill the other purposes God has for our life without family.

We were not meant to go through life alone. The fact is we need each other. You know, some people say, “Well, I’m a Christian, but I don't want to belong to any church.” That just doesn't make sense. That's like saying, “I’m a football player, but I don't want to be a part of any team.” It doesn't work. That's like saying, “I’m a tuba player, but I don't want to be a part of an orchestra.” A tuba player without an orchestra sounds pretty funny. It’s like saying you’re a soldier, but you don’t want to be part of an army.

God meant for us to be a part of a family – He never meant for us to be alone. Romans 12:5 says:

In Christ we who are many form one Body, and each member belongs to all the others.

The church is where you live out what it means to be a Christian. That’s how we move forward in faith and discipleship.

3- You were created to become like Christ.

The Bible word for that is "discipleship." Discipleship is the process of becoming like Jesus Christ. Romans 8:29 says:

From the very beginning God knew who would come to Him and He chose them to become like His Son.

God’s plan is to make you like Jesus Christ. Now, let me be very clear, He’s not saying you’re going to be god. You will never be god. God doesn’t want you to become a god; He wants you to become godly. He wants you to develop His character. What does that look like? It looks like Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:15 says:

God wants us to grow up... like Christ in everything.

We must understand this is a process. Maturity doesn’t happen over-night. It’s not like 1 day all of a sudden – ZAP – you’re just like Jesus. It’s a process, and this process is called “discipleship”, and it takes an entire lifetime. It’s going to take the rest of your life for God to build the character qualities of Jesus Christ in you.

I’m not going to say more about discipleship today because I’ve already spent several weeks on it and we’ll address it again in a later sermon.

4- You were shaped to serve God.

You were not saved to just sit through a church service weekly.

You were saved to make a difference in life by serving God and others. The Bible word for that is "ministry." Ministry is serving God by serving others.

The Bible says we're created to serve, we're saved to serve, we're gifted to serve. God made you to make a difference. And we are all uniquely shaped for ministry. God never gives us an assignment to do something without equipping us first. Job 10:8 says:

Your hands shaped me and made me.

Today, we're going to look at the 5 things God uses to shape you to serve: **S**piritual Gifts, **H**eart, **A**bilities, **P**ersonality, and **E**xperiences. That spells 'SHAPE'. God uses those 5 things to uniquely shape you, differently from anybody else in the world, for the purpose of serving Him. God made you unique and your uniqueness is not just for your benefit. 1 Peter 4:10 says:

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.

When I say the word "minister" most people think of a pastor, but the Bible says every believer is a minister. Ministry simply means using my shape to help somebody else in the name of God. Any time you use your talents, your abilities, background, or experiences to help somebody else, that's called ministry. All women are ministers. All men are ministers. All little kids, all older people, if we're believers, we're all saved to serve Jesus Christ.

And how do you serve? You serve according to your shape.

S Spiritual Gifts

1 Cor. 12:7 teaches that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to each one of us to help the whole church. If we don't discover and use our spiritual gifts, then something is lacking in the church.

Your spiritual gift is a key to your purpose. For example: If God's purpose for you is teaching, He will give you the gift of teaching. Discovering your spiritual gifts is key to discovering your purpose.

H Heart

Your heart is your innermost being. It is the source of your hopes, desires, ambitions, dreams – passion. The Bible says to serve the Lord with all your heart. A way to discover what's in your heart for ministry is to finish the statement – "somebody ought to do something about...." This statement shows what is in your heart for ministry.

A Abilities

Your abilities are the natural talents you were born with. Some people are naturally athletic, others are intellectual. Some have ability with words, others with numbers, others with mechanical things. Whatever ability God has given you can be used for the glory of God.

P Personality

Your personality is made up of your temperament and other traits that cause you to be either outgoing or introverted – a thinker or a feeler – someone who loves routine or variety. There is no right or wrong personality for ministry, but your personality will affect how you minister and exercise your gifts. For instance, you can have the gift of evangelism and be introverted or extroverted. The extrovert will be more confrontational; the introvert will be more of a lifestyle evangelist. Both are okay.

E Experiences

You have been shaped and are being shaped by your experiences in life. God uses everything that happens to us for our good. This includes:

- Family experiences – what did you learn growing up?
- Educational experiences – what were your favorite subjects?
- Vocational experiences – What jobs did you enjoy the most?
- Spiritual experiences – What have been your most meaningful times with God?
- Ministry experiences – How have you served God in the past?
- Painful experiences – What problems, hurts, and trials have you learned from?

Don't waste your sorrows. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says that we minister to others with the same help and comfort that God has ministered to us. Hebrews 6:10 says:

God will not forget how hard you've worked for Him and how you've shown your love to Him. How? By helping needy Christians.

5- You were made for missions.

You need a ministry to believers and you need a mission to unbelievers. In John 17:18, Jesus prayed this to the Father:

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

There is a common mission that we all share as believers.

In John 20:21, Jesus said, *As the Father has sent Me, I 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.

Your mission is to share the Good News. Once I know that God made me to love me and my life has a purpose - God says, “I want you to pass it on to other people.”

There's a word for this – "evangelism." Evangelism is the Greek word for “good news.” The Bible says that once I know the Good News, God wants me to pass it on to others. Now, where am I supposed to share it? In Acts 1:8 Jesus said:

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

When Jesus told this to his followers, do you know where they were? They were in Jerusalem. So here's the point. He is saying, first, I want you to start at home - with the people closest to you, 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 nearby, but they 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.” First, I must share with those in my world. But that's not enough. Love demands I move beyond my comfort zone to people with different backgrounds, different languages, different economics. I Corinthians 9:22 says:

I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News.

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.

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!

You can change the world by going, giving and praying. Now, not all of us can actually go to a foreign mission field, but we can go to the people around us who need Jesus. And we can all pray for missionaries and all can give to missions.

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.

The key to these 5 purposes is the Great Commandment – to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love others.

If you love God – you will worship Him.

If you love God's family – you will fellowship with them.

If you love God – you want to become like Him and He is love.

If you love God – you want to serve Him by serving others.

If you love God – you want to tell others about Him.

If you love others – you want them to know God.

You were made for missions – so say yes to the call of God today!