

The Bible and the Mission of God

Jan. 13, 2019

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: The Heidelberg Catechism

(Here is a psalm/song to help your group as you worship.)

Read through this question and answer as a group. Question: What is our only comfort in life and death?
Answer: That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Icebreaker

Name an errand your parents sent you to do, other than cleaning your room. What was your mission?

Text for Discussion: Genesis 12:1-3; Matthew 28:18-20

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

Jesus's Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) is a call for us to go and make disciples. That is our mission here at Pacific Crossroads: to gather, grow and send disciples of Christ. But the mission of God is tied to a much grander story, for the entire Bible can be understood through the lens of mission:

Creation

Out of nothing, God created the universe, including Adam and Eve, whom He formed in His own image. Of all creation, God had a special relationship with humans. He had given them dignity and authority and the ability to experience fellowship with Him.

The Fall

This fellowship was broken in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve rebelled, effectively saying they didn't trust God or want to submit to His will. This sinful act led to the alienation between God and humanity, which is the conflict at the core of the Bible. For how can a rebellious, sinful people restore their relationship with a holy and righteous God? This is the question that the rest of the Bible seeks to answer.

Redemption

At first, humanity continues in its defiant ways, attempting to be like God without God. Genesis 3-11 takes us down a dark road of wickedness, and it's clear people are incapable of solving this problem. And so God steps in, choosing to make a nation for Himself. God's purpose is to gather, to include and to be worshipped by all nations – and it is through Abraham's descendants this would be accomplished.

In the New Testament, Paul says that the family of Abraham isn't Abraham's physical descendants but his spiritual ones. Those who put their faith in Jesus are now part of Abraham's spiritual family and blessed along with him. Gentiles being justified by faith is therefore the fulfillment of how all the nations would be blessed through Abraham. For at the center of the whole biblical story is Jesus' death and resurrection, because to put our faith in Jesus is to trust that Jesus has taken our sin, given us new life, and reconciled us with God.

Jesus and God's mission to the nations are the fulfillment of the Old Testament. But through Jesus' Great Commission, we see a change in strategy. What had been "come and see" God's chosen people has become "go and tell". No longer were God's people to just be a light to the nations; they were sent out as ambassadors and witnesses (John 13:20, John 20:21). And so we too are being sent to participate with God in this mission.

Consummation

How does the story end? God will heal and restore His good creation, making all things new (Rev 21:1-5). The fellowship of the Garden of Eden will be restored, and countless numbers from every nation will stand before the throne of God in joy and celebration (Rev 7:9).

This is the story of how God rescues His creation and restores His relationship with us. God steps in and fulfills His promises through Jesus. But the story doesn't end with us as recipients; the story calls us to be participants. We were rescued so we could be sent. God has always intended to bless all the nations of the earth, and so we are invited into the divine mission to make disciples of all nations. Because this is our family story.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How do you respond to the idea that God has a mission for you personally?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- Read Genesis 12:1-3 again. Abraham's family was to be a channel through which people of every nation would be blessed and healed of a broken relationship with God. Name the ways God was calling Abraham to faith and dependence on Him.
 - What are the promises in this passage? How are you encouraged by the promises?
 - How is it that all nations are blessed through Abraham? (See Galatians 3:7-9)
- What does it mean to put your faith in Jesus? (See Heidelberg Catechism above.)
 - When did you put your faith in Jesus?
- Read Mathew 28:18-20 again. What were the disciples sent to do? How does this apply to us?
 - What are the promises in this passage? How are you encouraged by the promises?
- Describe the differences between "come and see" and "go and tell" missions. Name some ways each has been effective for missions.
 - Which do you think is most effective and why?
- The Bible doesn't call us to be merely recipients, but also participants. God has always had a mission for His people. How do you respond to the idea that God has a mission for you personally?
 - Read John 20:21. In what ways can you be more intentional about seeing yourself as one sent by God as His representative?
 - As a person who is rescued and sent, where do you feel God has sent or is sending you?

Prayer

Pray missionally. Ask God to open your eyes to those around you who need to hear the gospel message, then go and tell them. Pray for your loved ones who have not yet put their faith in Jesus. Pray that your friends and loved ones who do know Christ would boldly tell others of his love and rescue. Pray that the church would keep the mission of making Jesus known at the forefront.

Experiment of the week

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus this week)

Do something missional this week. See yourself as a missionary to your neighborhood, your workplace, and your family. It's not that you have to do something additional as much as to be intentional. Where you are is exactly where God wants you to be and you were sent there for His mission. Continue your Bible Reading Plan and share what you have been getting from it with others as a missional experiment.