



Missions

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Presented by Gordon Green

What is mission or being missional about?

Missional is not:

- the same as evangelism.
- a new way to talk about church growth. It is part of it but only one part of it.
- about making our local church attractive so that it will attract people to the church. That is good to do and some people will come, but that's about reaching out to those outside and drawing them into the church.
- about going out and taking God to the poor and weak and saying "I am doing God's work." This is missing the point of mission.
- about waiting for people to come to us.

To be missional means to be sent. Sent into the world. It means going to the people. This is about taking the church to the people and not bringing the people to church.

Where do we first learn about mission in the Bible? Where did missions first begin?

Answer: Missions didn't begin with the Great Commission. Missions began with God.

1 John 4:9-10 "*God showed how much he loved us by sending his only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. [10] this is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.*"

Luke 4:18 "*the spirit of the lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors*"

Mission first beat in God's heart before it was ever commanded in the New Testament.

God is:

- a missionary God
- missions minded.
- has a missional heart. He set the pattern. He took the initiative.

Jesus made himself nothing, humbled himself and became one of us to fulfill his Father's mission – the incarnation. He went to the people – especially the weak. He didn't stay at home and wait for people to come to him. Just as the Father sent Jesus so Jesus sends us:

John 20:21 Jesus said "*as the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*" We all have the responsibility of doing mission work. We are all missionaries in that sense. The church is the

instrument of God's mission in the world. Many believe mission is an instrument of the church i.e. "the church has a mission." More correct: "the mission has a church." This is about taking the church to the people and not about bringing the people to church.

Two major points regarding Mission

1. Let Jesus Shine Through You

“The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christ’s. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the bible itself, are simply a waste of time.” – C.S.Lewis

This is about discipleship. The Great Commission: “go and make disciples” Disciple making is probably the most critical element in missions. The heart of discipleship is to become like Jesus. Jesus provides the image of the perfect human being. Probably the most effective way to make disciples is by letting others see Jesus in you. This is not about forcing yourself, trying hard to be like Jesus but the closer we get to him (abiding) the more we will look like him and the more we look like him the more people around us will be impacted. Never underestimate the power of example (1 Thes. 1:6-9). Every Christian should be a walking sermon.

A missional theology is not content with mission being a church-based work. Rather, it applies to the whole life of every believer. Every disciple is to be an agent of the Kingdom of God, and every disciple is to carry the mission of God into every sphere of life. We are all missionaries sent into a non-christian culture.- Alan Hirsch

- We must be Incarnational.

We mustn’t think that God there are some places that God is “not in.” God can be seen as a church God or small group God or a Bible Study God but not a God of all life i.e. The rest is cut off from God. We must not separate the two.

Mission is first of all an activity of God before it is an activity of the church. Therefore, we participate in God’s mission and not the other way around. We are participating in what Jesus is already doing on our behalf. God is already there. We don’t take God there. We are not doing something “for God”. Jesus is responsible - we are responsive.

“Through our **union** with Christ we share in his **communion** with the Father and in his **mission** from the Father to bring others into that communion.” - James Torrance

See the relation between God, the world and the church differently. Our concern should be: join Jesus in his ongoing ministry on earth. Ask a vital question: what is Jesus doing here? Then discern the answer through the Spirit's illumination.

“There exists in every church something that sooner or later works against the very purpose for which it came into existence. So we must strive very hard, by the grace of God to keep the church focused on the mission that Christ originally gave to it.” – C.S. Lewis.

