



We will spend the next few months growing together as God's people as we journey through a study series we are calling *Missio Christi*

- Latin for *the mission of Christ*
- Mission = sending
- The Sending of Christ/Mission of Christ

We draw our inspiration for this series from the words of Christ to His disciples in John 20:21

- **As the Father has sent Me, I also send you**

Jesus was sent on a mission, by the Father, for the glory of God, and the betterment of humanity

- In the same way that Jesus was sent, we (the Church) are also sent
- On a mission, by Jesus, for the glory of God, and the betterment of humanity

That is what we will be exploring:

- What does it mean to be sent by Jesus in the same way He was sent by the Father?
- Today is an introduction to the series and the concept of mission

2 things we want to accomplish in this series:

1. We need to recapture our sense of *sent-ness*
2. We need to do mission like Jesus did mission

Ultimately, we want to see every Christian liberated to be **on mission and in motion** in his/her immediate context.

- Where you are right now
- Living with missional intentionality...
- Are you living for the Grand Purpose? God has invited you into meaning!

So what we will do is:

1. Study the biblical concept of mission
 - What is mission? (not "missions")
 - Where does mission come from?
 - Who needs to be on mission?
 - The next couple of weeks will get us started on that
2. Study the mission methodology of Christ
 - How was Jesus sent?

- Who did He go to?
- How did He love people?
- When did He confront people?
- In what ways did He reveal truth?
- How do we do mission?
 - This part will make up the bulk of the series and for this we will be spending all of our time in the Gospels
 - The next few months
 - Each Sunday sermon, when we get to the Gospels will have two parts...

The reason why this study series is needed at this time:

- There is a fundamental failure in the modern, American Church
- What this fundamental failure does is freezes the Church in its calling and renders us less than what God would have us to be

What is the fundamental failure that has us frozen?

It's multifaceted:

1. There is a failure to understand the **biblical concept of mission**
2. There is a failure to understand **ourselves as the Church**
3. There is a failure to understand **our context of North America**

1. How should we understand the biblical concept of mission?

- We will start with God—mission starts with God
 - God is the initiator of mission
 - All mission is God's mission
- **We need a theocentric understanding of mission**
 - As opposed to ecclesiocentric or anthropocentric or cosmocentric
 - We do mission because that is who God is and what God does
- God is a missionary God, who by His very nature, reaches out and sends
 - He is sender, sent, and sending
 - This will be what we study next week as we look at the nature of God
 - For now—Mission has its origin in and with God
 - Not the church (The church did not invent mission, it is part of God's mission)
- But the other thing we must say about God and mission is this:
 - Mission exists because worship doesn't¹
 - The **goal of all mission** is for God to be worshiped, adored and glorified among all peoples

¹ John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2003), 17.
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- So worship is the ultimate goal—not mission in and of itself
 - The reason is two-fold
 - 1. God is worthy
 - 2. Humanity is healed
- **We need a biblical understanding of mission**
 - The Bible is a book about God
 - Particularly the witness of God's mission and its unfolding in human history²
 - We can read the Bible missiologically or with a missional hermeneutic
 - Though we often don't—we usually read it selfishly
 - "What should I do" instead of "What is God doing"
 - Part of what the Bible reveals is that throughout history, God has chosen to work through people, not independent of people
- **We need a historical understanding of mission**
 - Abraham
 - Genesis 12:1-3
 - Abraham is blessed to be a blessing
 - All peoples/every nation is included in God's plan
 - God blessed a man to bless a nation in order to bless the nations
- God's mission unfolded across the centuries through the nation of Israel and reached its "revelatory climax"³ in the coming of Christ to the nation of Israel.
 - Cf. Hebrews 1:1-2^a
 - 1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,
 - 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son
 - Jesus is the full and final revelation and ultimate missionary
 - All mission from hence forward is centered on the person, work and message of Jesus
- God's mission reached its "functional climax" in Christ's ministry, death and resurrection.
 - All mission now functions according to the Gospel
- God's mission continued in the sending of the Spirit to call forth, empower, lead, and gift the church as the witness of God's good news in Jesus Christ.
 - Cf. Acts 1:1
 - The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach
 - Notice: Jesus began to do and to teach
 - The verbs are in the imperfect tense—meaning they are an ongoing action
 - The *missio Christi* is continued through the church
- God's mission continues today in the world-wide witness of churches in every culture to the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ
- God's mission is moving forward toward a promised consummation in the final day

² Darrel L. Gruder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 11.

³ Gruder, 4.

- The eschaton
- Which is not the destruction of all things, but rather the renewal of all things
- Revelation 21:1-5
- God's goal to make all things new

2. How should we understand ourselves as the Church

- The Church is not the goal of mission or the Gospel, but rather it is God's instrument and witness.⁴
 - **Disconnect:** We see our individual salvation and individual worship of God as the goal.
 - **Reconnect:** The goal is not our individual salvation and worship, but the renewal of the whole world and the worship of God by all peoples.
 - **Disconnect:** We see the Church as a place to meet our needs.
 - **Reconnect:** The Church is not where we get our needs met, but rather a means through which God meets the needs of the world.
 - **Disconnect:** We see mission as one of many programs of the Church, in which we may or may not participate.
 - **Reconnect:** Mission is not a program of the church, it defines the Church.
 - **Disconnect:** We "send" people off to other places to do missions
 - **Reconnect:** We have been "sent" to our place to be on mission
 - How our church perpetuates this disconnect...
 - What we might do to repair that at the end of this series (Sent Ceremony?)
- **The church is:** The people of God, called to God, and sent by God, for the glory of God, to meet the needs of the world with God
 - In that definition there are two driving factors
 - The first and most important is the glory of God
 - Humanitarian concern, though important, is not the driving force in mission
 - Mission is propelled by a deep love for the name and the glory of God⁵
 - The Apostle Paul spoke about his missionary endeavor as being "to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake." (Romans 1:5b)
 - The second is our identity as God's people
 - Because we are loved, we love others with the love with which we have been loved
 - Because we are saved, we seek to see others saved by the One who has saved us
 - Because we are reconciled, we seek to see others reconciled to God
 - Because we are cared for, we seek to care for others

⁴ Gruder, 5.

⁵ John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2003), 237.
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- Mission is not just a program of the church, it defines the church as God's sent people.⁶
- "We are called out of the world to belong to God, and also sent back into the world to witness and to serve. Moreover, the mission of the church is modeled on the mission of Christ. He Himself said so. 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you' (John 20:21)."⁷
- We must see ourselves as a sent people!
- We are supposed to BE the church in everyday life.
 - Not GO to church almost every Sunday
- Mission should be normal, easy, doable, everyday life
 - Be liberated in your new identity

Need to get ourselves to see that we are 'sent' everywhere we go!

Full time mission and full time ministry

- To get this, we have to know our identity in Jesus

3. How should we understand our context as North Americans?

The *Modern Missionary Movement* (1792⁸-present)⁹ has been a great success

But the Church in North America has most recently experienced a loss not only numbers, but in power and influence in society¹⁰

The question we need to ask ourselves right now is this:

- How should we view our immediate context? Our culture? N. American society?
- As a mission field or as evangelized?

In 1908 Pope Pius X terminated the "mission status" of the American church.¹¹

- Was that a right thing to think and do in 1908? I don't know, I wasn't around.

But I am around now, and as I look around I see a culture that is far from God, a church that is far from God, a Gospel that has been perverted and maligned, and an increasingly anti-Church/Christian/Christ attitude.

If North America could ever have been considered evangelized, it certainly is not now.

- Our society is post Christian and rapidly moving toward anti-Christian

⁶ Gruder, 6.

⁷ John Stott, *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 20.

⁸ With the Publishing of William Carey's book *An inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (that is only half the title)

⁹ Yvonne Wood Honeycutt, "New Pioneers Leading the Way." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 377-381. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009.

¹⁰ Gruder, 1.

¹¹ Harvie M. Conn & Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & the People of God* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic), 54.

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- **Why that matters is not because we are afraid of the church being marginalized, but because we want less people inspired by hell and going to hell!**

It is fair and proper to speak of North America as a mission field¹²

- If you doubt this is true, just think about your own work place, school, family for a moment...

Having agreed that our context is a mission field, we then must ask ourselves:

- **How can we (the Church/a church) be faithful to Jesus, the Gospel, the Scriptures and our calling and sending in North America? (Cf. Western World)**

We (the church in North America) need to go back “mission status”!!!

That’s what this series will be about.

- *As the Father has sent Me, I also send you*

But we must start by beginning to shift our paradigm—

- From thinking:
 - The mission field is “over there”
 - To realizing it is “right here”
- From thinking:
 - Mission is something “they” do
 - To realizing mission is what “we” do
- From thinking:
 - As a church we “send” people
 - To realizing that as the Church we are “sent-people”

God’s mission is:

- His calling us to Himself in worship, and then sending us into the world in service, to represent His kingdom and proclaim His gospel wherever we find ourselves.

God help us to be *on mission and in motion*

¹² Gruder, 2.
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