

## 4. God's mission - Our mission

KCBW, Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Mar 2018

John 4:34-38

Here Jesus says 'I have come to do the will of him that sent me.' The Father's mission was **His** mission. This was His food, His sustenance, His comfort and His goal. This is where he got his fulfilment and his purpose in life. And I want to suggest to you that the Father's mission is our mission too. Therefore it's important to seek out what the Father's mission is! That should be our goal. But when we ask what the will of God is for my life, we get overwhelmed with the options.....

It's amazing how you can become so familiar with something and, if it's something complex, you get so caught up with less important issues that you totally miss the most important ones. I was with my teenage grandson recently who has the same telephone as me, a Galaxy S7 edge. It's a great phone. I use it as a phone; I read books on Amazon Kindle; I have a Bible, a calendar, email, WhatsApp, Sky news, alarm clock, Internet and all the other things that modern mobiles have. I thought that an S7 Edge referred to the edge of the screen, which was just a novelty, but he started using a small ruler on his and I said how did you get that? He said it's on the edge. I said how do you mean and he explained that on the edge there is another world of available apps which are available at the stroke of your thumb! He couldn't believe that Granddad had such a fabulous phone and not see the main issue, on the edge!

You may put that down to my senior years, but I think it's possible that most Christians have missed God's main purpose and goal for our lives; the greatest passion of our Father's heart. We have instead been taken up with all the peripheral or secondary details of the Christian life, important as they are. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his right'ness and everything else..."

**Today, consider 'The missional basis of the Bible' – not 'The biblical basis of Mission'...**

We need to understand the difference. We could teach the biblical basis of family life, because it's included in the Bible. But we could not teach on *the family-life basis of the Bible*, for this is one of many subjects in the Bible. Similarly with marriage... Biblical basis of marriage but not *marital basis of the Bible*. But we can talk about the mission or basis of the Bible because God's mission is what the Bible is about. We must not see mission as a small theme in the Bible, rather it is the big picture, the whole story, it is central to God's purpose and will for our lives.

Of course this is a problem in life. You can get so consumed with minutiae that you forget the most important things about life: family, relationships, health and so on. And it can be a problem in the Christian life. We get so taken up with all the separate elements of the Christian life like prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, small group, being holy, seeking God for spiritual gifts for healing, an area of service in the church, stewardship, keeping good relationships and et cetera, but we can miss the main event. And the main event is that God has a mission, a purpose, a goal and an objective. The whole of history is about this mission and this mission is what Christians have been called to participate in. This is our high calling, business, vocation. It is our mission. In Acts is called "the work." Cf 1 Cor 15:58, 16:10

So let's look at the big picture that God is on a mission and I'll be saying that we are, by virtue of our calling to follow Christ's, we are crucial in the fulfilment of that mission. Two weeks ago the atheists, Stephen Hawking, died. He became famous for his book called *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* - a popular-science book on cosmology (the study of the universe). We should become more familiar with *The Brief History of Time - From Genesis to Revelation*. From beginning to end, throughout the entire journey of God's history we find a mission statement on every signpost as we travel. This mission is what the Bible is about. It is the background for God's story and our story. Since creation, God has been passionate about redeeming a people for Himself. Genesis to the Revelation is about bringing every people group, every nation to His throne. The Bible is not a collection of separate books with no common theme or story. It is one book with an Introduction in Gen 1-11, a Plot: Gen 12 – Mal, A New Beginning Mt to Jude and a Conclusion: Revelation. This is God's mission, his purpose in the world.

Whistle-stop tour... INTRODUCTION 4 th'gs - Actually Gen is 4+4, Ab, Isa, Jac, Josph, well known **CREATION** God begins in Genesis by commanding mankind to fill the earth. In Gen 1:28,

“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth...” This wasn’t mere procreation. It wasn’t a command to go and have some fun and make babies everywhere. God created Adam and Eve in His image and he wanted them to fill the earth with these image-of-God-bearers, these worshippers. God has always had a plan to fill the earth with a worldwide family with intimate relationships, close fellowship and a family bond. However, we know that by Genesis 3 sin and selfishness had crept in and damaged the image. **FALL**

God’s creation began to be soured. Divisions and destruction became a trait in all men. It got so bad that God was ‘grieved that he had made man and his heart was filled with pain’ because ‘every inclination of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil all the time’ so God sent the **FLOOD** and gave the earth a new beginning. He said to Noah, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Again the command is to multiply and fill the planet with a community of God followers – lovers.

But failure came again - men rebelled against God’s command to fill the earth and instead said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.’” Gen 11:1-4. So God confused their languages and re-created them into diverse nations, scattering them all over the earth. Gen 11:7-8 **NATIONS CREATED**

So as we end the introduction, we see that God has people scattered all over the earth speaking many different languages. How is He going to reach all of them? What will He do? Who will He use? This is where the plot begins.

### **PLOT - A SINGLE NATION CHOSEN AS A MISSIONARY NATION**

As soon as God creates the nations, He initiates a plan and sets aside one nation that will be his missionary nation. Genesis 12:1-3 “The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you...I will bless you...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’”

And Abraham’s family became a missionary family. Next in line was Isaac to whom God says, “I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.” Gen 26:4

And to Isaac’s son, Jacob, in Genesis 28:14

“Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.”

Abraham’s family became the Jewish nation. Israel was specially chosen to be God’s ambassador in the earth. This covers the whole of OT history. Wherever you look you find this theme restated. Eg The 10 Commandments were given by God to Moses and the people for a missional purpose. “Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” Deuteronomy 4:5-6

Ps 67:7 God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Zech 8:23 This is what the Lord Almighty says: "In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'"

Isa 49:6 I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

Just to make the connection to us, we are spoken of in the NT as being the spiritual descendants of Abraham, Gal 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Gal 3:8-9 8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Gal 3:14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Acts 13:47-48 For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

When we got saved we bought into the promise of Abraham, the calling of Abraham, the mission of Abraham. If we are in the family. We are a part of the mission. It is a missionary family and the church inherits the same mission that the people of God have had throughout the whole Bible.

This is our privilege. This is our calling. We are caught up in God's plan of the ages. We are part of the great rescue mission of God. God has called you and I, and all Christians in every age and every place, to be his witnesses, his ambassadors, salt and light for God in this world, a city set on a hill, shining like stars in the universe. This is who we are. This is our great high calling. This is what we are for in this world and what God is calling his people back to, in these last days.

### MISSIONAL THEME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

As we travel to the NT we see God's story remains the same, except now it's Christ, God in the flesh, who takes up the baton and begins a new movement that's destined to change the world.

His first words to prospected disciples was, 'Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' He called God's people back to the mission when he entered the temple area designated for the Gentiles to worship and found people buying and selling there. He drove them out, saying, "Is it not written; 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'?"

JOHN 4 here – Jesus ecstatic! About non-Jews getting saved in mults! He knew the plan!

He spent 3 ½ years training 12 disciples how to win men and women for God. With his eyes on the future he says in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Comment

His parting shot to the disciples was Matt 28:18-20 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The mission is on God's agenda until the very end of the age. It is our highest calling, our greatest privilege, our chief honour and should be our main business.

George W. Peters - God is a God of missions. He wills missions. He commands missions. He demands missions. He made missions possible through His Son. He made missions actual in sending the Holy Spirit. What about you?

Frances Xavier was the Jesuit director of missions in India, China and Japan in the 16th century. (Overwhelmed by the teeming masses in Asia's multitudinous cities) He once said that he longed to be back in Paris 'to go shouting up and down the streets to tell the students to give up their small ambitions and come eastward to preach the Gospel of Christ.' Apply: I want to say that to you!

And it has been done before! I have been researching the reasons for the amazing success of the early church and found quotes like these which reveal the secret: After the original apostles, many "preached the Gospel more and more widely and scattered the saving seeds of the kingdom of heaven far and near throughout the whole world. For indeed **most of the disciples of that time**, animated by the divine word with a more ardent love ..... performed the office of evangelists, being filled with the desire to preach Christ to those who had not yet heard the word of faith, and to deliver to them the divine Gospels. And when they had only laid the foundations of the faith in foreign places, they appointed others as pastors, and entrusted them with the nurture of those that had recently been brought in, while they themselves went on again to other countries and nations, with the grace and the co-operation of God. For a great many wonderful works were done through them by the power of the divine Spirit, so

that at the first hearing whole multitudes of men eagerly embraced the religion of the Creator of the universe. Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Chapter 37 3-4<sup>th</sup> cent.

John Foxe described their zeal in his famed Book of Martyrs saying, "In that age every Christian was a missionary. The soldier tried to win recruits, the prisoner sought to bring his jailer to Christ; the slave girl whispered the gospel in the ears of her mistress; the young wife begged her husband to be baptized; everyone who had experienced the joys of believing tried to bring others to the faith"

It's time for us to give up our small ambitions, to reconsider how we expend our time and energies, to rethink what priorities we should make in their lives.

### OF COURSE, THERE WILL BE PROTEST AT SUCH A SUGGESTION

Some will say, we need more of the Holy Spirit. And they are absolutely right! Jesus said, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world." But we **have** received the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is given to help us evangelise the lost. And I don't believe that God will give us any more of the Holy Spirit until we start using that which he has given us already.

Some will say, we need to give ourselves to prayer. And they are absolutely right! But remember that Jesus said my house should be a house of prayer for all nations - it was a prayer that the mission would be fulfilled. Furthermore, 1 Tim 2:1-6 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Some will say the most important thing is Christian unity. And I couldn't agree more! John 17:20-21 "My prayer is ..... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Some will say my principal objective is to be more holy. Wholeheartedly agree! Holiness is the single most important issue for evangelism. John Wesley said, "Get on fire for God and men will come to watch you burn." Holiness means being insulated, but not isolated, and holiness will only ever enhance your ability to be a pure channel through whom God can bless others. You are God's shop window for people to see.

Some will say I'm concentrating on developing my spirituality. While absolutely! Paul says to the Colossians the same as he says to other churches in the NT, that the three hallmarks of true spirituality are **faith, hope and love**. He says because of these 'the gospel is bearing fruit all over the world and growing just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood it.' Col 1:6

Do you know that almost every Christian virtue and practice in the NT is vitally connect to our mission, Our holiness, our spirituality, relationships, prayer lives and so on. 'If you take missions out of the Bible, you won't have anything left but the covers' – Nina Gunter

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army 'Not called!' did you say? 'Not heard the call,' I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear Him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters and servants and masters not to come there. Then look Christ in the face — whose mercy you have professed to obey — and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world.

Hudson Taylor Would that God would make hell so real to us that we cannot rest; heaven so real that we must have men there, Christ so real that our supreme motive and aim shall be to make the Man of Sorrows the Man of Joy by the conversion to him of many.... The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.

John Wesley - You have one business on earth – to save souls. Look at his life and effects of His mission Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. Application