

Always on Mission – 2 Corinthians 5

Last Sunday, I drew your attention to the concept that stewardship involves more in our Christian walk than just being concerned with how we manage our money. While this is important, it is also important for us to manage all our blessings in a manner that pleases the Father and in a manner which helps promote the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And, as we saw last Sunday evening, we do this while collaborating cooperatively with fellow believers to grow the Kingdom. This morning, I would like to piggyback off last week and home in on another basic discipline which demonstrates where our heart truly lies. If our heart is in tune with our Savior and we are diligently *working out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12)*, then every believer understands the significance of living a life that is **Always on Mission**. In fact, it is our duty and our privilege as Jesus followers, individually and as a local church, to set our lives on a course which fulfills the command of Jesus to “*make disciples.*”

Everyone is familiar with Lifeway and their resources. Well, according to Lifeway, of the eight key attributes found in maturing believers, sharing the gospel, aka: evangelizing; was identified as the least prevalent. It's no secret that each believer has a personal responsibility to share the good news of Jesus Christ with other people in hopes they will accept Him and serve Him as Lord of their lives also. However, most studies about Christian evangelism reveal that most believers understand this command but are simply not comfortable in bringing Jesus up in their everyday conversations. Let me put it a bit more bluntly... we know what we should be doing, but we just aren't doing it! Most claim fear as the number one reason. No one has a desire to constantly face ostracism. Am I right? Many Christians are content with hiding behind their faith and think it's acceptable to function as some kind of special operative for Jesus. It sort of reminds me of Simon Bar Jonah. You know, the guy who Jesus named Peter. Not the mature man preaching the powerful message at Pentecost but the immature man hiding in the shadows while Jesus stood trial as an innocent man. Again, being blunt; we love Jesus when it's convenient and there is no threat to us when revealing our identity in Christ. I found immature Peter and all of us other secret agents a theme song. Have a listen... **(Play Johnny Rivers – Secret Agent Man clip)**

Don't you think it's time we stopped hiding in the shadows and started obeying this command to “*make disciples*”? Don't you think it's time we addressed this massive shortcoming in our churches? But what does it mean to always be on mission? And how do I go about living on mission? These are two things I hope to address for you this morning and I hope will encourage you as you continue progressing down your path of personal spiritual growth.

What does it mean to always be on mission and to live on mission? After all, our new birth doesn't automatically grant us the ability to faithfully obey. Faithful obedience is something we must work towards as we mature in our walk. An effortless way to look at is this... Living on mission means you are living your life with the purpose God intends for you. You must embrace your identity in Christ and then work with urgency to live out “that” life and not your old one. In other words, if you want to discover who you are in Christ, you must first understand how God sees you. Then, as I mentioned last week from Paul's teaching in **Ephesians 5:15-16**, you must

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”

Here are some things the Bible says about how God sees you. Let me begin with one of my favorites.

Romans 8:15-17: You are a child of God. Jesus is your big brother! And you know what that means? Nobody messes with my little brother or little sister!

Romans 8:37-39: God loves you!

2 Corinthians 5:17: You are a new creation. The old you is dead!

1 Peter 4:10-11: You are gifted!

John 16:33: Because of Jesus, you are victorious!

These are just a few examples of what you’ll find when searching the Scriptures for how God views you. Trust me, there are many more ways. Read about them, right here in God’s letter to you. Oh... wait! I left one off. I want to give you one more. You may not like this one, but as we looked at last week, when Jesus said, *“Go therefore and make disciples,”* that makes you a missionary! Part of your individual identity involves being sent out as a representative of Jesus!

With identity comes purpose. Paul understood this concept very well. So much so, that He taught it and lived it. He understood that our purpose was to share the Gospel with those who are lost, with those who may believe other doctrines, and with those who practice false religions. The Apostles of the early church understood this too. After Pentecost, they went out and preached Jesus. So much so, that it cost all but one of their lives.

Let me show you a few examples of what I’m talking about.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-27. Six times in this passage, Paul speaks of winning or saving the lost. I love too how he lets us know what is often required to accomplish this. He even lets us know we should approach the task at hand. You want to understand your role in evangelism, I suggest doing a deep study on this passage.

Now look over to 2 Corinthians 5. I know we have looked at this next passage before, but it’s important we go here this morning because it helps solidify Paul’s teaching for us. Let me set it up a bit first. Paul in the first part of chapter 5 of 2 Corinthians assures us of our heavenly reward and although we long to be in heaven with our resurrected bodies, he reminds us that our current bodies and lives are at the mercy of God’s timing. In the meantime, we will face temptations and experience pain because of our faith. He also reminds us that all these things are bearable because of the Holy Spirit which lives in us. Verse 10 stands as a key verse for us this morning. It sets the table for the rest of this chapter. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:10.**

Every believer will one day stand at the judgement seat of Christ and be rewarded according to what we did here on earth. The following few verses help us appreciate the significance of standing before Jesus and having to account for our actions. I don’t know about you, but I no longer want to be “secret agent man, secret agent man”!

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21.

Paul says here that we share the message of Jesus, not from obligation, but because of relation. We will speak the truth and live the truth when we know and understand the truth. When we learn to walk in fellowship with Christ to the degree that Paul did, we too will be motivated into action by the Holy Spirit and then, disobedience will no longer be an option. You see, we don't have to wait to stand before Jesus. Since the Holy Spirit is in us and God is always with us, everything we do, we do in the presence of God. And we share the truth of the gospel because we know the truth about eternity. When our hearts truly belong to Jesus, we will share the good news of what He has done for us and all those people we may be afraid to share with will realize that it's coming from the heart.

I love verses 14 and 15. You know why? It explains to me that it's okay to love Jesus in such a way that everything in your life falls under His control. I said this last week. Jesus didn't give us lip service. He did what He said He was going to do, and that means a lot! This level of love should compel us to talk about Him. Remember, "*for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*"? It should compel us to live for Him!

Which is the third of Paul's points concerning evangelism from this passage. When Jesus truly lives in us, and we know that our old person died with Him on the cross, then we will spend our remaining time here, living for Him and not for self. A life lived because of Jesus and for Jesus is a life lived on mission!

Part of our purpose aligns with our identity. We should identify as a missionary and we should understand that our role is to become a mediator and peacemaker between those living hostile lives towards God and those living their lives for God. Remember, God is not the sinner. Man is! And the only way for peace to exist between the two lies in the reconciling power of the work on the cross. Because of Jesus and the power of His Spirit in us, we can then become true ambassadors for the faith.

Paul said all this in hopes that we would work to discover our identity in Christ and then develop a sense of urgency to share Jesus with the lost. Look... our time is almost over. Many people will die, stand before the judgment throne of God, and will be missing one thing. Jesus. Without Him, their reality is Hell. We have the message of salvation. We've learned about it. We've experienced it. We've lived it. Now, we must share it! No longer can we passively wait on the lost to come to us. We must become intentional. We must put forth an effort. We must endure through the tough stuff, and we must let as many people as we can know how much Jesus means to us and how much they mean to Him!