

The Mission of the Church

by Brian Brodersen

The mission of the church is to proclaim the gospel to the whole creation and to make disciples among all nations, and we can be involved in this mission by preaching, planting churches, and showing love and good works.

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Scripture: Matthew 28:19, 1 Peter 2:9

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Description

Brian Brodersen emphasizes the mission of the church, rooted in 1 Peter 2:9, highlighting that believers are called to be a royal priesthood and a holy nation tasked with proclaiming God's praises. He stresses that the church's mission is to spread the gospel and make disciples, urging every Christian to engage actively in this mission rather than being passive spectators. Brodersen encourages the congregation to view themselves as missionaries in their daily lives, reaching out to those who have not heard the gospel, and to support church planting as a means of discipleship. He concludes by reminding the church that they are vital instruments in God's mission, which is to save many from all nations, and that each day presents new opportunities to fulfill this calling.

Transcript

Well this morning I want to draw your attention to one verse in Peter's first epistle and it's in the second chapter. It's the ninth verse and there Peter writes these words. He says, but you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

And so what we want to focus on here today is really just the mission of the church. I thought it was an appropriate topic for having the emphasis this week on mission. So we want to look at the mission of the church.

We could, I think, I was thinking maybe a better title might have even been the mission of God. Because God is on a mission and he's seeking to fulfill that mission through the church. So God is on a mission, the church is on a mission, we are individually members of the church.

So the reality is each one of us are called to a mission and that's what we want to consider for just a few minutes today. I want to quote to you from a recent book by John Stott. He said this, according to the

apostle Peter the church is both a royal priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices to God, which is worship, and a holy nation to spread abroad God's praises, which is witness.

Every Christian congregation is called by God to be a worshipping, witnessing community. Indeed, each of these two duties necessarily involves the other. If we truly worship God, we find ourselves impelled to make him known to others in order that they may worship him too.

The church has a double identity. We are a people who have been called out of the world to worship God and sent back into the world to witness and serve. These are, in fact, two of the classical marks of the church.

According to the first, the church is holy, called out to belong to God and to worship him. According to the second, the church is apostolic, sent out into the world on its mission. So I couldn't agree more.

The church is both a center of worship to offer up our praises to God, but we are also, as Peter says, called to show forth the praises of the one who's called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. So what is the mission of the church exactly? There are numerous passages that we could draw from, but just to kind of summarize what the New Testament says, it is simply this, that the church is to proclaim the gospel to the whole creation and to make disciples among all of the nations. So this is something that I think is so vital that we understand we have a purpose as the church.

We are on a mission. A church is not a spectator event. It's not something that we come and just, you know, watch other people do things, but it's something that we are each one of us to be engaged or to be involved.

There is a work to be done in every nation. The majority of people have not heard the gospel. Some have perhaps heard of Christianity.

Some might even have come into contact with the church. Perhaps they've heard the name Jesus, but most haven't heard the gospel. You can bet that that is true, and you don't have to go outside of the border of this country to find that to be the case.

All around us today, there are people, listen, who haven't heard the gospel. They've heard of Christianity for sure. They might have visited a church.

They know the name of Jesus, but hearing the gospel is a totally different story. I have met numerous people that are familiar to some extent with Christianity, but when it gets down to the gospel itself, you find that they've never really heard it. As I've had experiences over the years of sharing the gospel with people, I've had them respond back and said, I've never heard it like that before.

So this is what we're faced with. We're faced with a world that for the most part hasn't heard the gospel, and it's the church's task to get the gospel out. That's our mission.

And I don't know about you, but I get excited to think that we're on a mission, that each and every day of our lives can be an adventure because every morning when we wake up, we wake up to the reality of a mission. Lord, there's something today that you want to do. There's something you want to do in my life.

There's something you want to do through my life. There's a purpose for getting out of bed in the morning besides just going out to the mundane. That's the wonderful thing about being part of the church of Jesus

Christ.

So we want to look at three things here today in regard to getting the gospel out because that's what we're to do. So how do we do that? And first of all, we do it by preaching. Preaching, proclamation.

When we think of preaching, generally what we're talking about is getting the message to the unbeliever. And preaching is carried out by gifted evangelists as well as ordinary Christians. Now we all probably understand the gifted evangelist part, but I think a lot of times we don't realize that ordinary Christians do much of the work of evangelism.

As a matter of fact, if it weren't for ordinary Christians, most of the work of evangelism wouldn't get done because even when you have gifted evangelists who maybe speak to large groups of people occasionally, they're totally dependent on ordinary Christians to invite people to these events, to encourage them to come out and hear the gospel. But we see this in the scriptures. As we read the book of Acts, we find the gospel preached by gifted evangelists such as Peter on the day of Pentecost.

You remember he preaches the gospel there. We find Stephen is a gifted evangelist who preaches the gospel. Philip, Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, all of these different men, we've got pictures of them throughout the book of Acts, showing them preaching the gospel to larger numbers of people.

But we also have the picture of ordinary Christians who went everywhere proclaiming the good news. So we have both of these things exemplified for us in the biblical text. We also find occasions where preaching is directed toward groups of people, such as the thousands that Peter preached to on the day of Pentecost, as well as occasions where preaching is directed toward individuals.

So we find Philip, for example, speaking to the Ethiopian eunuch, or we find Paul and Barnabas sharing the gospel with the pro-council Sergius Paulus. So the book of Acts is, it's sort of our blueprint for how the church is to go about the mission of God throughout its time here on earth. So we look back to those things that happened then as an example to us, but we today must proclaim the good news to our world as they did to theirs.

So we don't just read about what they did and say, wow, that was exciting back then, and boy, I wish I would have lived back then, and too bad, you know, that all happened way back then. We look at that and say, okay, this is the model. This is what God was doing back then, but it was a picture of what he wants to do in each successive generation right to the moment when the Lord returns.

So what do we do then? Well, we preach the gospel today through gifted evangelists as well to groups of people. That's what we do in regard to the different outreaches, and we've had a vision for outreach. We want to maintain a vision for outreach.

We want to get behind those opportunities to reach out with the gospel where you have some sort of an event maybe that people are invited to that they can hear a clear presentation of the gospel, and this is a valid, legitimate thing to do. You know, sometimes people, when it comes to getting the gospel out, it seems like a lot of times people get stuck in sort of, well, there's just one way to do it. To me, I think as many ways as we can possibly get the gospel out, we ought to utilize all of those ways.

Some people say, oh, you know, I don't believe in crusade evangelism or something like that. It's just masses of people coming and, you know, you never know if anybody's getting converted or not. And then they've got their particular way of, no, I think you ought to do it this way.

Well, you know, I think we ought to do it every conceivable way, every imaginable way. Any way we can get the gospel to people, we ought to, of course, prayerfully and be led by the Spirit, but we want to do that. And so we've got those kinds of outreach things that we support.

We've got outreach things that we sponsor. We've got outreach that we encourage you, the body, to be involved in. But then, of course, there's the ordinary Christian, average everyday person, just out there speaking to their friends and their neighbors and their co-workers and sometimes occasionally even strangers, speaking to them about the Lord.

We often feel, I've heard many people say this, well, you know, I'm not really gifted as an evangelist. You don't have to be. You just, as a Christian, you can just open up your mouth and just tell your story of what God's done in your life or just, you know, reach out and seek to speak to people.

And when we're talking about preaching, getting the word out through preaching and, you know, talking about ordinary Christians preaching, I'm not suggesting that tomorrow morning you go to work, you get a soapbox, you set it up in the middle of the office and you, you know, say, you know, hear ye, hear ye, I've got a message for ye all. You know, you do it, of course, through relationships, through, you know, just there on the job with people, making yourself available, being open, just saying, Lord, here I am, would you use me? You see, here's the thing that we need to get a vision of. We need to get a vision of being missionaries right in our own world, right in our own culture.

We don't have to go across the sea to a foreign field to be a missionary. We have to start thinking of ourselves as the mission field is all around us. We've got a mission field right here.

God has brought us into contact with lots of people that don't know him. And that's our mission field over the years. And, you know, in the past 25, 30 years here in this particular area that we live in, you think of all of the people that have come from different nations, Asian nations, Middle Eastern nations, and South American nations, all of the people that have come to this area, in many ways, God has brought the mission field right to us.

So we have to think in terms of getting out there and realizing that I am a missionary. As a Christian, I am a missionary. I'm on a mission.

God's on a mission. The church is on a mission. I'm part of the church.

So our mission is to get the gospel to people. I watched an interview this past week with a young church planter, a young guy that has planted a church. And before he planted his church, what happened is he was seeking the Lord and he was reading through the gospels, he said, and as he read through the gospels for a year straight, he said the one thing that was really being impressed on his heart was just how Jesus was a friend of sinners.

And then he said, and I realized I'm not a friend of sinners. And the guy who was interviewing him said, well, what do you mean by that? And he said, well, I pretty much had isolated myself. I worked at a church.

I spent all my time at the church. I pretty much only associated with Christian people. And he just said, I looked in my phone and I noticed I didn't have any phone numbers for sinners.

I didn't know any sinners. So he said, you know, he just felt really burdened by the Lord. He needed to get out and engage and start meeting some people who were sinners.

And so he prayed about what to do, and he felt like he needed to go out and get a job where he knew there were sinners. So you don't have to go far to find them, of course. But interestingly for him, he said that he got a job at, and this is the way he described it, a gay friendly rock and roll bar.

And so the guy says, well, okay, so what happened? He said, well, you know, he said every day I just get up and before I go into work, I just say, Lord, I'm going there as your agent. I'm going there on a mission. And so, Lord, I pray that you'd help me develop relationships and, you know, that sort of a thing.

And he just described how God began to work. And he said one day as he was there cleaning the toilets, the Lord spoke to him and said, you're going to preach the gospel in this place. And he just thought, okay, well, great.

That's what I'm hoping to do. But anyway, he had a commitment to finish up a seminary for a year. So he went off for that year and the whole year while he was finishing up his studies, he prayed every single day that God would send them back to that community and use them to reach sinners.

So when he finishes up his education, he comes back into town. The first person he runs into is the owner of the bar. But interestingly, he had had no previous conversation with that person.

He said the person was an atheist. They were very hostile to God. And so they'd never cross paths other than him getting hired.

And that was the end of it. So he says he runs into this person and they said to him, oh, you're back. And he thought, wow, I didn't even know they knew that I'd left.

Yes, I'm back. Well, what are you doing? Well, I'm, you know, I've got this Bible study and I'm hoping to start a church. Oh, you've got a Bible study.

Could I come to it? Could you come to it? Well, sure. You could come to it. So the person came to the Bible study in his house.

He said in his living room, there were 45 people. And after the Bible study, the person came up. Remember this person's an atheist person comes up and says, you know, this was nice.

I enjoyed this, but it's obviously not going to work. Your house is too small. You need a bigger place.

And so he remembering what the Lord told him earlier when he was cleaning the toilet, he said, how about if we do this in your bar? And they said, sure. Sounds like a great idea. So they've got four Sunday services in this bar today.

And, you know, what he was saying was how, you know, God, and it's a mixture. Obviously there's believers, but there's a lot of unbelievers that are coming and they're, they're intrigued. They're wondering, you know, what, you know, what is going on? There's a church in this bar.

I mean, you know, this, this is, this is radical in one sense, but in another sense, it's not, because this is the kind of stuff that's been happening over all of the centuries. And when we look back at the early days of what God was doing in this church and many of the churches that are part of the family of churches here, we see that similar kinds of things were happening because people have had that mentality. I'm on a mission and that's, we've got to get that mentality back.

And I think what a great opportunity we have with a brand new year before us to just realize today, man, I'm a missionary. And tomorrow when I get up, I'm going out to the mission field, Lord lead me as I go, Lord guide me and give me opportunities to share your word, to proclaim the gospel. So preaching number one, secondly, church planting, church planting.

The local church is the place where disciples are made. Remember the mission? What is the mission? The mission is to proclaim the gospel to the whole of creation and to make disciples of the nations. Disciples are made through the local church.

That's what the local church is. It's the center for discipleship. So we need to continue to encourage church planting, continue to support church planting, continue to look to raise up men to go out and plant churches.

If you're in your late teens or twenties or thirties or forties or fifties, you're a candidate or sixties. I'll keep going. Uh, you're a candidate to go out and do something.

When I was in my early twenties, I sat in this church and I listened to pastor Chuck teach week after week. And my heart was stirred and I was doing ministry. I was working in a surf shop in Huntington beach, and that was my mission field.

And every day I went to work, I pray, Lord, use me here today and give me an opportunity. And unbelievably every day, the Lord gave me some opportunity to speak to somebody about him. But I just, I wanted to do that.

I wanted to share the word. And then lo and behold, as I just sat and listened, I thought I want to teach the Bible and God opened the doors. And that's happened to many, many hundreds.

And yet I don't want to keep always looking back and saying what happened back then. We want to have the mentality that this is still happening today. We still need churches.

We need more churches. Every city in the world, as far as I'm concerned, ought to have a Bible believing Christ centered church. I think that that's a good goal to shoot for.

We might never make it, but you know, Hey, it's something to shoot for. So the local church, we've got to keep planting churches, disciples become ministers of Christ in their daily lives and impact others for Jesus. So you see, that's why the local church is so important.

This is why, even when we do evangelism, we never do evangelism separate from a local church. Years ago, when God sent me into Eastern Europe, we went in there knowing nothing, having very, you know, just a few people we had contact with that invited us in. We went in, we started to minister on the streets.

We reached out, we preached the gospel. We had a dozen young people receive Christ. And that very moment I was in this great quandary because I knew we've got these kids that just accepted the Lord, unless they have a church, they're never going to survive.

And we knew in the environment that they came from, there was no church that would have accepted them at that point. And so it was crystal clear to me that we got to have a church for these young people. And I said to them, I said, listen, we've got to go back to the States, but I promise you, I want you to hold on for a month.

I want you guys to meet every day. I want you to read your Bibles together every day. And within a month, we'll have somebody back here.

And I came home and recruited a group of young people and sent four people back. And that was the first church plant in Eastern Europe. And that's the discipleship began there.

And these kids started to grow. And now many of them are leading churches themselves. But you see, we've got to have that connection with the local church, the local church equips, encourages, and sends others out to plant new churches.

And so get that in your head, be open to that, be, be realizing that God might want to do that with you. You've sat and you've been equipped. And I want to give you that encouragement that God might want to, to move you in that direction.

You know, I think sometimes it's easy to just, you know, you just sort of look at the guys up front teaching or whatever, and you, you know, you just think, well, that's great. I could never do that. Well, guess what? All of us at one time sat thinking the same thing, but God had different plans.

So this is how we get the gospel out through church planting. And then thirdly, we have to realize as well, the connection between sharing the gospel, getting the churches established and love and good works. You know, we're living in progressively more difficult times, aren't we? Things are getting tougher.

Life is changing here in this country and in places around the world. And I think that we can safely say things are going to continue to get worse. I don't know that things are going to get any better, but it doesn't, it doesn't really matter.

If we understand who we are and what we're doing here, we're not here to just live a comfortable, easy life and, you know, just relax and cruise. That's not the purpose of the church. That's not the mission of the church.

We're here to get the gospel out. We're here to serve the Lord. And one of the things that opens the door for receptivity to the gospel is when God's people reach out to unbelievers with love and good works, the poor and the needy, the widow and the orphan, the sick and the suffering Jesus ministered to all of these kinds of people.

And guess what? The way things are going in our culture, we are going to see more poor and needy, more widows and orphans, more sick and suffering. And we have a golden opportunity there to reach out. This is what Jesus was talking about when he said, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven.

Have you noticed that it seems that the world is in more turmoil these days than it was in earlier decades? Seems to me that it's just constant. There's constant turmoil. And I think that's just the direction that things are headed in.

We have to realize that this atmosphere is the ideal atmosphere for what we do. This is how the mission is moved forward. When people are comfortable, when people are at ease, when people are prosperous, when people don't have any problems, they're generally not interested in help or they're not really concerned about whether there's a God.

But it's when things get tough and all of the foundations fall out from underneath people, that's when they start to reconsider everything. And so when we think of the catastrophes that have come and will come, the terrorism, the failing economies, the unemployment, and the like, all of these things present us with unique opportunities to reach out in love with good works to share the gospel. So these are the things that we do as the church.

This is the mission. The mission is ultimately to see people come to Christ. We do that through preaching, through church planting, and through reaching out.

And I think that we will have more and more opportunities. But here's the thing that's on my heart, and this is something that I was thinking a lot about as I was preparing the message yesterday. I was thinking about planning.

We've got to be thinking about these things. We've got to have a little bit of a strategy so that when the bottom falls out, that we're there and we're ready to do what we can to help and then to get the gospel to people. Patrick Johnston, a missiologist, a man who was a missionary and has written much on just the spiritual condition of the whole world, basically, in his book entitled *The Church is Bigger Than You Think*, he wrote this.

He said, the 20th century, and I think the 21st can be added right in there, but the 20th century has been notable for terrible wars, famines, tyrannies, and immense natural catastrophes. Yet it is these traumatic events that have contributed to the harvest into God's kingdom. These negatives are an essential component, he says.

Somehow God's redemptive purposes are worked out in love, but in the context of tragedies that open hard hearts and break down barriers to the gospel. Then he ends by saying God is doing an unprecedented work in our day. These mighty works are not in spite of the disasters, but even because of them.

So what's the point? The point is this. God is allowing the world to fall apart. It's going to fall apart.

We already know prophetically what the scriptures say, but God is allowing the world to fall apart, the church to remain here at this time, and there's a great harvest to be reaped. Our mission is to take advantage of these opportunities and to remember we are on a mission. God is on a mission, and we are looking to take advantage of every opportunity to get the gospel to as many people as we can.

So God is on a mission to save many from among all nations. The church is his instrument for accomplishing the mission. You as a believer in Jesus are a vital part of that mission, and this is what I want you to leave here with today.

You are a missionary. You are on a mission, and if you think that way, it'll revolutionize the way you live. It'll revolutionize the way you look at every aspect of your life, that you see yourself constantly as being on a mission.

I'm serving the Lord. Whatever I'm doing, it's all being done for the glory of God and ultimately for the fulfillment of his purpose. We are vital to this mission.

We are the mouth that will speak for Jesus, the ears that will listen for him, the eyes that will show compassion, the feet that will carry the gospel to those who haven't heard it, the hands that will reach out

and touch the hurting, the lonely, the outcast. God's on a mission, and we are the instruments through which he wants to accomplish his mission. The younger generation of Christians today, they're using terms, they're saying the same thing, they're just using different terminology.

Talk to some of the young guys today, and they talk about being on mission. It's kind of like, man, I'm on mission. What do they mean by that? What they're saying is, I'm going out into my own culture, and I want to be out there as a missionary.

Whatever I'm doing throughout the day, I'm on mission. I'm serving the Lord. I'm seeking to advance his kingdom.

I'll tell you, if we get that mentality, if all of us get the mentality, I'm on mission, it's going to create a revolution. It'll turn things radically right side up for many people. Might never change the direction of the culture ultimately or the nation ultimately, but it'll certainly change the direction of the lives of multitudes of people, and that's what God is primarily interested in.

So God's on mission, the church is on mission, and we're part of the church. You're on mission. Don't forget that.

Realize that. Pray about that. Yield to that, and get ready for some excitement, because God's got a lot of work for us to do in the year to come.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you that, Lord, you're working, and you've called us to work together with you. And so, Lord, even this morning, right here, we want to give ourselves over to you again, Lord, offering up our lives as living sacrifices, Lord, to fulfill the mission that you have appointed for each of our lives.

Lord, help us to see with your eyes. Help us to hear with your ears. Lord, help us to understand with your heart and mind.

Lord, help us to have your vision for this world. And, Lord, truly, as we get up each day, may we get up with a realization that today is another day on the mission field with expectation that you're going to work and use us for your glory. We pray these things in the name of Jesus.

Amen. Let's stand together. If you need some prayer this morning, maybe there's something specific God's ministered to you.

As you've listened to the Word this morning, the pastors are up front, available to pray with you, would love to pray with you. Maybe you need to, you realize, you know, I need to get my life right with the Lord. I hear what you're saying about mission, but I got to get my own heart right.

Do that. Don't procrastinate. Don't wait another day.

These men are up front. They'd love to pray with you for that. God's got good things in store in the year ahead, and you don't want to miss out on any of them.

So, God bless you.

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