

# The Mission of the Church

Acts 1:6-11 – Evening Service – January 8, 2012

Purpose – Mission – Vision - Strategy

## ➤ *What is the Believer's Purpose in Life?*

### Key concepts

- The \_\_\_\_\_ of the church is to glorify God  
I Corinthians 10:31  
Colossians 3:17, 23
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of the church is to make disciples

Our purpose focuses on \_\_\_\_\_

The mission focuses on \_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 3:8

## ➤ *What did Jesus Emphasize at His Ascension?*

Acts 1:6-11

### The priority for the disciples and for us

1<sup>st</sup> - The priority is \_\_\_\_\_ not detailed information about the future

2<sup>nd</sup> – The priority is a focus on the \_\_\_\_\_

### The church needs

\_\_\_\_\_ to reach the lost

\_\_\_\_\_ to reach the lost

## ➤ *What Is the Power of the Holy Spirit Given For?*

The power of the Holy Spirit is given for \_\_\_\_\_

The power of the Holy Spirit is provided for \_\_\_\_\_

making (Matthew 28:19-20)

**Principle #1** – The primary purpose of the church when it is *gathered* is \_\_\_\_\_

**Principle #2** – The primary purpose of the church when it is *scattered* is \_\_\_\_\_

## ➤ *What Happens When a Mission is Clearly Understood?*

5 “w’s” of a healthy church environment

## Wrap Up

II Corinthians 5:14a

For the love of Christ controls us ...

## The Mission of the Church

Acts 1:6-11 – Evening Service – January 8, 2012

**Intro:** SABBATICAL RESEARCH: One of the most beneficial things about my 2011 Sabbatical was reading and researching things regarding the purpose, mission, vision and strategy of the church. I read several books on the subject that constantly directed me to Scripture. In many ways Riverpark has been applying these. But I also realized that we have not been as clear on these as I could outside of the Inquirers Class. So I'm glad to have time in this 10 week series to examine and explain our purpose, mission, vision and strategy.

There are quite a few believers who have become “spectator-Christians.” My goal throughout the years is to move spectators into participants in the church.

### 4 elements

1<sup>st</sup> – Salvation and a commitment to be involved in the life of other believers –

MEMBERSHIP

2<sup>nd</sup> – Spiritual growth –

MATURITY

3<sup>rd</sup> – Use of one's spiritual gift

MINISTRY

4<sup>th</sup> – Involvement in sharing the gospel

MISSION

We do not have to look far to discover our purpose and mission as a church. These are not seasonal principles; these principles have been given to us ... and our mission is the mission Jesus made abundantly clear.

Vision

Strategy

Purpose

Mission

*Which comes first?* Here is the order

Purpose

Mission

Vision

Strategy

Our mission comes from knowing WHY Jesus left us on earth after He paid for our sins.

Understanding WHY we exist is our PURPOSE.

Understanding our role in the lives of others is our MISSION.

To evaluate if we're staying true and on course with our MISSION ... we develop a VISION.

So ... when we talk about the vision of the church ... we must first understand WHY we exist, WHY the church is here ... WHAT her priorities are. WHAT the Lord wants us to be doing ... and be looking for fruit or results in these endeavors down the road.

STRATEGY THEN DEVELOPS WHEN WE UNDERSTAND OUR PURPOSE AND OUR MISSION. Good news! These have been given to us in Scripture ... and it doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand these.

When you know what your mission is, you will know how to evaluate your progress.

## ➤ *What is the Believer's Purpose in Life?*

### Westminster Shorter Catechism

*Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.*

This helped us develop our own purpose statement ...

### Riverpark purpose statement

*We exist to delight in God by declaring His glory and the authority of His Word while making disciples who treasure Christ above all else.*

With this statement before you ... what phrases focus on our PURPOSE and what phrases focus on our MISSION?

### Our Purpose

- ✓ Delighting in God
- ✓ Declaring His glory and the authority of His Word

### Our Mission:

- ✓ Making disciples

### Key concepts

- The **PURPOSE** of the church is **to glorify God** ... which is abstract.

#### **I Corinthians 10:31**

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

“*whatever you do*” is hard to define.

#### **Colossians 3:17, 23**

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

#### **I Corinthians 8:6**

yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

- The **MISSION** of the church is **to make disciples** ... which is practical and concrete.

### Watch this

When we make disciples (our mission), we glorify God (our purpose).

Our **purpose focuses on GOD** ... We exist for Him—not for ourselves.

The **mission focuses on PEOPLE** ... making disciples

Our goal for disciples:

That they might treasure Christ above all else.

**Philippians 3:8**

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord ...

With a mission focused on people we fulfill our purpose – glorifying God.

Funny thought about purpose:

*The Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes come close.*

If a church does not understand its mission, enthusiasm will wane ... will be lacking. A church without an understanding of its mission will be an unhealthy church.

So let's begin by asking the question ...

➤ ***What Did Jesus Emphasize at His Ascension?***

**Acts 1:6-11**

So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

1:7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

1:9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

1:10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

1:11 They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

When Jesus was about to ascend into heaven after His death, resurrection and 40 days of appearances on earth to validate His resurrection ... His disciples would ask some key questions that every generation of believers needs to know the answer to.

The question – What should we be looking for next and what should we be doing while You are gone?

Just like you and me ... the disciples had what we often have ... a desire for the good things of the future ... without labor in the present!

What comes to light

The disciples thought that now that Jesus was alive from the dead, they would be able to enjoy His reigning on earth!

- ✓ Whereby Jesus would overthrow the Roman Empire
- ✓ Jesus would become the King and rule in Jerusalem

#### What the disciples ... and all of us need

- Don't let end time prophecy replace **PRIORITY** duties.

In other words: Witnessing to a lost world ... reaching a lost world is more important than your understanding of future things. Don't get me wrong, God wants us to know about things to come ... but not at the expense of duties in the present!

Courses in theology are not what the disciples needed.  
The immediate entrance of the full kingdom of God is not what the world needed.  
Reaching a lost world is a priority!

#### The priority for the disciples and for us

1<sup>st</sup> - The priority is **POWER**, not detailed information about the future.

The priority is POWER, not SKILL!

*Who are the people Jesus uses? He uses the "B" team*

- ✓ **If you were a race car driver**, you would choose the fastest car.
- ✓ **If you were a chef**, you would choose the finest ingredients.
- ✓ **If you were a jockey**, you would want the strongest horse.
- ✓ **If you were an athlete**, you would want the best equipment.
- ✓ **If you were a CEO**, you would want the most qualified staff.
- ✓ **If you were Jesus, you would want the weak and dependent?**

The 12 disciples were the "B" team. There was nothing special about the men. They were ordinary people. They *became* special as they surrendered their loyalty to Christ.

*Regardless of your skills ... God has picked you for His team.*

2<sup>nd</sup> – The priority is a focus on the **GOSPEL** – getting it out!

Jesus was not interested in giving His disciples more insight into His return. He was interested in telling them about their power and their mission.

The priority of the church until Christ returns is to have Spirit-empowered ministry which will result in effectiveness!

A danger of academia ... of scholarship that is devoid of application

#### **II Timothy 3:7**

always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

There is a way to increase attendance to the evening service. The way to do that is to teach on prophecy ... or teach through the Book of Revelation. The reason – too many Christians like to study future things rather than ministering with immediate things.

Just like you and me ... the disciples had what we often have ... a desire for the good things of the future ... without labor in the present!

What comes to light

The disciples thought that now that Jesus was alive from the dead ... they would be able to enjoy His reigning on earth!

- ✓ Whereby Jesus would overthrow the Roman Empire
- ✓ Jesus would become the King and rule in Jerusalem

What the disciples ... and all of us need

Understanding of the priority of witnessing to a lost world ... reaching a lost world

Reaching a lost world is still a priority!

The church needs

**POWER** to reach the lost

**BOLDNESS** to reach the lost

The priority of the church until Christ returns is to have Spirit empowered ministry which will result in effectiveness!

**Acts 1:8**

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

➤ ***What Is the Power of the Holy Spirit Given For?***

The power of the Holy Spirit is given for **WITNESSING**.

The power of the Holy Spirit is provided for **DISCIPLE** making.

**John Philipps**

*"The disciples could not more convert a SOUL than they could create a STAR*

The same is true for us today. The disciples then and disciples today need a power outside ourselves to do this.

*What is the duty of a witness? This is profound! The duty of a witness is **TO BE A WITNESS!***

**Matthew 28:19-20**

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Concerning our mission

In Matthew 28 ... Jesus did not tell us to go into all the **churches** and **mentor believers**. Jesus said go into all the world and make disciples.

In other words ... first and foremost in the great commission is EVANGELISM!

I'm not wanting to diminish the importance of mentoring, for this is a clear mandate of Scripture (II Timothy 2:2).

But in Matthew 28 the mandate is for ALL believers to be involved in the Great Commission.

Question for you ...

*Can you share the gospel with someone and lead them to salvation right then and there?*

Mothers and fathers, your children are your primary mission field.

Oh how I long for and desire that every person at Riverpark be trained in personal evangelism.

One of the most effective means – everyone is trained to share and use their own contacts to witness! Everyone knows and can give their own testimony.

**Principle #1** – The primary purpose of the church when it is *gathered* is **EDIFICATION**.

**Principle #2** – The primary purpose of the church when it is *scattered* is **EVANGELISM**.

Story: James Drews

Quiet, reserved ... been a Christian a lot of years but has never been trained in evangelism. He began D.E. in September and has faithfully attended. He told us last Tuesday night that he's been afraid to share the gospel because he's not articulate. He's intimidated by his co-workers because they are so negative – so lost. But finally he shared with one of his co-workers from whom he expected negativism through the presentation. Instead the man listened. He didn't come to faith at the end of the presentation ... but that night he did. And the next morning he thanked James for sharing Jesus with him ... and then told James that he placed his faith in Christ. AND IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE SEEN SO MUCH CHRISTIAN JOY THAT JAMES IS EXPERIENCING. HIS MISSION IN LIFE WAS LIVED OUT ... and joy, satisfaction, fulfillment and purpose for living was realized. And these are the kinds of things that bring this pastor some of his greatest joy!

Some churches use strange approaches to reach the lost ...

A Michigan pastor who says he's doing everything he can to reach out to people who don't feel comfortable at a traditional house of worship has opened a tattoo parlor inside his church.

### ➤ ***What Happens When a Mission is Clearly Understood?***

When we clearly understand our mission, we will evaluate what we do based upon that mission. And our priority mission is the Great Commission.

5 “w’s” of a healthy church environment

**WORD** – Instruction from the Word, submission to the Word, discipline in the Word

**WORSHIP** – Remembering our purpose – to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Our purpose focuses on God ... our mission focuses on man.

**WITNESS** - Evangelism

**WORKS** – One another passages

**WARMTH** – The Great Commandment to love one another

My friends ... you are the tool of the Spirit of God.

SINCE OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE DISCIPLES ... THE EVALUATION OF THE MISSION IS – *SHOW ME YOUR DISCIPLES!*

Disciples flourish in a healthy church environment.

When a church understands its purpose, mission, vision and strategy to reach its vision ... all kinds of positive things happen.

- ✓ **A vision creates UNITY**
- ✓ **A vision facilitates FUNCTION ... increases activity in the right things!**
- ✓ **Vision enhances LEADERSHIP**
- ✓ **A vision prompts PASSION**
- ✓ **A vision creates ENERGY**  
Vision enables leaders to stop putting out fires and start igniting fires.

THE VISION OF PEOPLE COMING TO CHRIST AND DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL MATURITY TOUCHES THOSE IN MINISTRY AND MOVES THEM TO ACTION.

The vision of people coming to Christ and developing spiritual maturity touches those in ministry and moves others to action. And people sold out to Christ and to His mission discover that total transformation of one's life toward Christ-likeness is what ministry is all about (Colossians 1:28-29).

What is the best forum for encouragement in these things and development of these things?  
SMALL GROUPS! Stay tuned for further details on this ...

## Wrap Up

*What makes our mission so compelling!*

### **II Corinthians 5:14**

For the love of Christ controls us ...

### **John 3:16**

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ...

Understanding what we have because the mission was fulfilled in our life.

Understanding of the love of Christ that compels us to be about His work!

**Transition to Communion:**

**In a quiet time right now ...** have a time of self-examination in preparation for our time of communion.