

The Missionary Model

Missionaries are really special people, wouldn't you agree? They give up comfort, security, and lots of other things to serve God in a unique way that He has called them to. It takes faith, trust, surrender, and obedience to answer that kind of call, whether long or short term.

When you go on a mission trip and you get home, you are thankful for the experience and opportunity to serve God in another place but man, are you are glad to be home!

I've heard things like "missions are not for everyone", and "I wish I could do that".

While I don't think everyone is called to go to Mexico every year. I do think missions are for everyone and I do think that everyone can do them! Everyone can have a part in every mission!

What is a missionary?

1. a person sent by a church into an area to carry on evangelism or other activities, as educational or hospital work.
2. a person strongly in favor of a program, set of principles, etc., who attempts to persuade or convert others.
3. a person who is sent on a mission.

You see not everyone is sent out by the church to do some big evangelistic activity, and not everyone is so compelled by their strong faith to go out and persuade everyone to convert. BUT every single Christ follower IS a person who is sent on a mission!

We are to imitate Jesus. We are to look like Him and act like Him. We are to do what He would do. Jesus is the missionary model. He was sent on a mission!

John 6:38 (NKJV)

38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Philippians 2:5-8 (NKJV)

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Jesus was a missionary. He left the comfort of not just His home, but the comfort of HEAVEN, to come to this earth and live life as a man facing all of the challenges the world could throw at Him. AND HE WON!

I don't know about you but leaving St. Elmo for Tepic doesn't sound that difficult or that far of a sacrifice compared to leaving holy heaven for sinful earth!

But there were people in Mexico that needed help. People who need God's love. And it's not a small thing to have went there to show it to them and help the local ministries connect with them.

Jesus did the same thing. There were (still are) people on this earth that needed help. People who needed God's love. So He came, and showed everyone the love of God, even to the point of death on a cross so that they could be offered salvation and forgiveness of sins!

"God had an only Son and he made him a missionary." - David Livingstone (Missionary to Africa)

Jesus knew why He came:

Mark 10:45 (NKJV)

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Mark 2:17 (NKJV)

17 When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Luke 19:9-10 (NKJV)

9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; 10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

1 John 3:8 (NKJV)

8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

Jesus came to serve others, to call them to repentance, to save them, and to destroy the works of the devil!

When people give up their comfortable lives and move to a foreign land, they are on a mission to share Jesus and love people. That might not be what God is calling you to do, but that doesn't mean you aren't called to missions. This is a mission that all believers are called to do. It doesn't have to be in another country, it can be in your workplace, school, the store, or even your home!

JESUS MAP

Look at this map of just some of the historical events that were part of Jesus ministry. Keep in mind that Jesus' ministry was just over 3 years long. These things were done all over Israel which is about the size of the state of New Jersey, our 5th smallest state.

It looks like everywhere He went, He ministered.....because He pretty much did. And He is our example. He's the missionary model!

Remember what Paul said?

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV)

1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Paul did a pretty good job of imitating Jesus.

PAUL MISSIONARY MAP

This map shows the routes of Paul's missionary journeys. Most of the time when we think of Paul we think of the apostle, the church planter, but a church planter is a missionary. He had to bring the message to a place that needed it in order to plant the church!

Paul's ministry lasted a little over 30 years, so he had 10x the time of Jesus and he was all over the continent. Some of these places he spent several years in before moving on to another. He preached, planted churches, raised up leaders, and moved on when the church was in capable hands.

NT CHURCH MAP

Look at the results of Paul and early Christians. Look at the impact of their missions. Churches all around the area! That is good fruit. That is the result of mission minded believers that know their call and their purpose.

We are called to be missionaries....

Jesus gave up the comfort of the throne because He went on a mission....a mission to show the love of God to mankind. He did this by redeeming us with His shed blood on the cross. Could God have done this a different way? YES, of course He could have.....but He wanted us to see His love for us.

John 15:12-13 (NKJV)

12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Could God speak to people and save people without using us? YES, of course He could.....but He wants people to see His love THROUGH US. This requires more of God's Spirit in our lives...

John 3:30 (NKJV)

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

This means being more like Jesus, letting the Spirit lead you, being selfless, loving others even when you don't want to, even if they don't deserve it, even if it's uncomfortable.

So now you know that you are called to be a missionary. What's next? Sell everything?

Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

This is the instruction that Jesus left us with. I want you to see something here. Where does Jesus tell us to be witnesses?

Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, to the end of the earth. There is a progression.....when He delivers this it is to those waiting on the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. Being a witness starts at home, in your house and in your city.

You don't have to sell everything and go to be a missionary. If you are called to, then go, but if you aren't, then start here! If you can't love people in your immediate influence, why would you think you can do it on a larger stage with even more messed up people? Love the people in your reach. Love your city.

Next is Judea and Samaria....that is regional, your state and country. Learn to love at home then GO!

Then....to the end of the earth. Tell the world about Jesus. Show the world the love of Christ.

The battle plan that Jesus laid out hasn't changed in over 2000 years

1. Witness to those around us
2. GO, witness to everyone else

This is God's plan for your life because it's His plan for all of us.

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

He already has things planned for you to do.....YES YOU!

There are some who are called to pack up and go. Some on a short term mission like we just went on, others for a long term mission. It's important that we support them financially, prayerfully, and physically.

In the bible, the first missionaries had the support of the church. Many of them had some kind of trade that they could do for a little income but most of the support came from other believers. They would spread the gospel to areas that the local church could not.

Our mission is to make disciples for His Kingdom and for His glory. To disciple someone it takes time and effort. You can't make a disciple in a day or even a week.

This is why we partner with the Fabian and Carol in Iraq, Jeff and Mary Ann in Israel, Adam and Kate in Kansas City....they are pouring into people, spending time with them to make disciples not only to present the gospel and then leave them alone to figure it out.

This is why we teamed up with Tony Simon and La Fuente in Mexico. We were able to help them accomplish things they couldn't effectively do alone. We helped show the love of God to people who needed it for the first time, others who needed reminded that they are loved.

But THEY are the ones who will continue to build relationships and make disciples. We aren't just going for a week and abandoning those hurting people....the local missionaries are continuing the work of loving them.

Every Christian must be involved in missions: praying, giving, and going. If you are not a missionary, then you are a mission field. If you do not evangelize, then you must be evangelized.

Our mission as a church - is to follow that original battle plan Jesus gave His disciples in Acts 1. We must be His witnesses in St. Elmo, Altamont, Vandalia, Effingham, and to the very ends of the earth.

We are all people sent on a mission....love God, love people.



