

Crossroads: What is Our Mission? – Part 1

Introduction:

1. Knowing your mission is very critical in anything you endeavor to do in life. If you don't know what you are aiming at, it is really hard to hit the target.
2. Every organization needs to understand the core reason why it exists.
 - **Illustration:** One restaurant chain has their mission statement on the wall of every restaurant. It reads: Our mission is to create encore experiences that enrich lives one person at a time.
3. Should the church have a mission? Look throughout your Bible and you know what you will find? Every person, group, or nation that did anything worthwhile in God's Word did not do it by accident.
4. God communicated to the leader or group the mission, and then the leader communicated it to the people. Once the people were equipped with an understanding of the mission, they worked together to fulfill it.
 - **Illustration:** Nehemiah and the building of the wall, Moses and the construction of the tabernacle, Joshua and the nation of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land, King David and King Solomon and the building of the temple, the apostle Paul.
5. The church is different than a secular business in that it is a **living** organism - the body of Christ. We are brought into a living union with Jesus Christ. But the body of Christ is then broken down and organized into local assemblies.
6. If those local assemblies don't understand the mission or purpose of why they exist, they will spin their wheels and never accomplish all that they could for God's work.
7. Where do we find and discover our mission or purpose? The latest church growth book? Somewhere on the Web? Is it something I have to invent?
8. Thankfully, God has already given it to us and laid it out clearly in His Word. Even more specifically, God raised up the apostle Paul and revealed to him the truth of the body of Christ, and it was Paul who was the first church planter.
 - Paul planted and established local assemblies of believers, ordained leaders, and God gave Paul thirteen books of the Bible written specifically to local churches and leaders.
9. From this we can clearly derive our mission. Why does CrossRoads exist? Why are we here? What is the purpose? What are we trying to accomplish?

1 - Save the Lost

1. Jesus clearly stated that He came, *"to seek and to save that which was lost."*
Luke 19:10
2. Paul reiterated this point and said *"that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..."* **1 Timothy 1:15**
3. Every person is a sinner that is separated from God by wicked works, but can be reconciled to God through the payment that Jesus Christ made on the cross for sin. **Colossians 1:21-22**
4. How will people hear the message of Christ's payment for sin and His glorious resurrection? Will Christ speak it to them?

- Christ has ascended into heaven and Paul said, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, *“yet now henceforth know we him no more.”*
2 Corinthians 5:16
- 5. God has given to us (the local church) the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors **for** Christ. We represent Him on this earth to those who are lost and need Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**
- 6. Part of our mission is to proclaim the gospel of Christ to Daytona and the entire world. We must constantly think and strategize how we can more effectively get the message of Christ out to the lost. **1 Thessalonians 1:8**

2 - Grow the Saved

1. After people trust Christ, they are spiritually alive. Their dead spirit within is now quickened and indwelt by God's Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 2:1, 1:13**
 - **Illustration:** What is a baby's greatest need in the first 24 hours after birth?
Food, nourishment.
2. A new Christian's greatest need is to immediately get food and nourishment for his/her inner man. Where does that come from? It comes from God's Word.
1 Peter 2:2
3. After people trust Christ, Satan would love to see them destroyed immediately. The way we defend ourselves against Satan is through God's Word, therefore it is essential that the new believer immediately start growing through the food of God's Word. **Ephesians 4:14-15, 6:17**
4. The Thessalonians came from a pagan background with little or no knowledge of God's Word. After salvation, notice what Paul did. **1 Thessalonians 2:11-13**
5. God's goal for believers is that they become fully mature Christians who are allowing Christ to live through them in every area of their lives.
6. That maturation process takes place as people learn, understand, digest, and apply God's Word to the details of their lives.
7. Many churches do a very good job of reaching the lost, but there is no real food for believers after salvation.
8. **Galatians 4:19** is very instructive in this regard:
 - Paul calls the Galatians *"my little children."*
 - This phrase literally means "infant."
 - The Galatians were Paul's spiritual children. He labored and travailed in order to bring them to Christ. Do we labor intensely to bring people to Christ? Paul likened it to a mother travailing in birth to bring forth a baby. They were Paul's spiritual babies.
 - But the Galatians had gotten entrapped in the legalism of the law. They were not magnifying Christ and His grace. They were not walking by faith in Christ.
 - It broke Paul's heart, and Paul said he felt as if he were travailing in birth all over again as he wrote this letter to them. This time it was a different kind of travail.
 - The first time it was that they might place their faith in Christ.
 - The second time it was that Christ might be **formed** in them.

- In other words, Paul desired that they might grow in Christ and that Christ might show forth His life through them. **Galatians 2:20**
- Paul wasn't concerned about religion or a denominational creed forming in them. It was **Christ** he wanted to see formed in them. What a lesson for the church.
- Our job is not done when we work and travail and lead people to Christ.
- We must work just as hard to teach new converts the truths of grace and see them not only rooted in Christ (this happens at salvation), but built up in Christ (this is continual). It is not enough to simply see them trust Christ for salvation. We want to see Christ being formed in them.
- We must evangelize **and** teach. **Acts 14:21, 18:8, 11, 23**

Crossroads: What is Our Mission? – Part 2

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3 - Equip the Faithful

1. Unfortunately, not everybody who makes a profession of faith in Christ demonstrates a desire for spiritual growth and maturity. Some people simply do not prove to be faithful.
2. But when a person begins to grow and learn God's Word, it is the church's job to provide training and equipping to that person. Why? So that they can take what they are learning and use it to impact others in ministry.
3. The church must equip people for Christian service.
 - Bible study is wonderful and needed, but it is not the final objective.
4. Do you know what ministry is? It is taking what you have learned and helping people. If you sit in church and soak up the Bible teaching for 20 years, but never get involved in ministry, has the church accomplished its mission? Absolutely not!
5. The key verse for this is **2 Timothy 2:2**. Pastor Timothy's job was to take what he had learned (not just Bible knowledge, but the practical tools to apply it) and impart it to others. But then what? Then they are equipped to go out and help somebody else.
6. Equipping the faithful doesn't take place in a huge worship service. It takes place best in a one-on-one setting or a small group setting. Notice how Paul had equipped Timothy. **2 Timothy 3:10**
7. The church's job is to identify "the faithful" and provide training so that they can serve the Lord in a meaningful ministry. Many times churches gather together and study the Bible, but there is very little ministry taking place in and through that church.
8. The mission of the church is to equip faithful people to serve the Lord in meaningful ministry to others. **1 Corinthians 16:15-18** is a great example of this. This family was actively laboring, helping, and ministering to people.
9. A faithful person who has been equipped for ministry is impacting and changing lives!
10. Do you see the three-fold progression of the mission?
 - First, the church preaches the gospel and seeks to see lost people become children of God.
 - Second, the church teaches God's Word to these baby Christians so that they might grow up and mature in their understanding and faith.

- Third, the church identifies the faithful within that second group and provides the practical training and tools they need to serve the Lord in ministry to others.

4 - Send forth Workers

1. When a faithful person is equipped to serve the Lord, that person becomes a worker for Christ. **1 Corinthians 3:5-9; Philippians 2:25, 4:3**
2. Timothy is a great example of a man who reflects the end result of this four-fold mission:
 - Timothy believed on Christ and was saved. **Acts 16:1**
 - Timothy was taught God's Word and grew in his faith. **2 Timothy 3:15**
 - Paul identified Timothy as faithful (**Acts 16:2-3**), and personally equipped Timothy for service. **2 Timothy 2:2, 3:10, 14**
 - Timothy became a fellow-worker of Paul and was impacting lives as a worker for Christ. **1 Thessalonians 3:2**
3. The end goal of the church is not to fill its members full of Bible knowledge. This is **part** of the mission and is very important, but it isn't the ultimate goal.
4. The mission of the church is to equip faithful people so that they can be sent forth and be actively impacting and changing lives.
5. My desire is to see God send forth workers to serve in the ministries right here at Crossroads, but also to serve in other ministries around this world.
6. This is why every church must be involved in missions outreach. It is so vital to the mission.
7. The measure of a great church is not its **seating** capacity, but its **sending** capacity.
 - Packing people in pews is not the ultimate goal. This can be learned and done apart from God's Word or God's power. There are churches that don't even preach the gospel of grace that pack pews every week.
8. But in order to fulfill the true four-fold mission of the church, it requires the faithful teaching of God's Word, rightly divided; and the transforming power of God's grace.