

Cross Fellowship Church
Overland Park, KS
January 19, 2020
Our Mission
Matthew 28:16-20
John Crawford

Well, this morning we are continuing in the sermon series we began just a couple of weeks ago on our vision, mission, and goal as a church. I mentioned this a couple weeks ago, but thought it would be good as we start a new year to regroup, reset, and refocus together as a church. It's easy as a corporate body to kind of grow complacent, stagnant, and maybe lose focus along the way. Not saying that's necessarily what we've done here, but it's easy to do it. That's the temptation for any group or body of people. As we're beginning this new year, 2020, we thought it would be good to refocus and regroup together as a church and remind us of important things like who we are, why we're here, and where we're headed. We call this our vision, our mission, and our goal as a church. In January we'll be looking at this vision, mission, goal. In February we'll be looking at core values, which help to shape and undergird and fuel this vision, mission, and goal for our church.

So what that means is January and February is going to look really different from what we normally do on Sunday morning. On most Sunday mornings, we're going through a book of the Bible, preaching expositionally, going verse by verse consecutively through a book of the Bible. January and February as we're looking at vision and mission, goal, and values, it's going to be a lot more topical in nature. Some Sundays we'll focus on just one specific passage of Scripture and preach expositionally on that specific topic. Other sermons like this morning we're going to be looking at four different passages of Scripture.

If you look at the bottom of your handout you can see in italics what we call our vision, mission, and goal as a church. That Cross Fellowship Church exists to glorify God by making disciples of all nations. So our vision is to glorify God. That's what we did a couple Sundays ago. By making disciples, that's our mission. Of all nations, that's our goal. Our vision, mission, goal. We exist to glorify God by making disciples of all nations.

A couple weeks ago we looked at our vision to glorify God. This morning we're going to look at our mission. This whole idea of mission, what do I mean by that? With that word, mission, we specifically refer to the particular task or assignment that Jesus has sent to us or commissioned us into this world to do and to accomplish. So, like I talked about a couple of weeks ago, instead of us as elders going out into some small cave out in the middle of nowhere and talking together about some creative, innovative, fresh mission for our church, it made a lot more sense for us to come to this Word and to study this Word and to figure out from this Word the mission that

Jesus gave to the Church for all time. And then for our particular local church to align ourselves with the mission that Jesus has given. Does that make sense? We're not the brightest five elders in the world, and so you don't want us to be the ones coming up with the fresh, innovative, new mission for Cross Fellowship Church. Trust me, you don't want that. Instead, what you would want is for us to submit ourselves to this Word and to discern from this Word the mission that Jesus has given to the church and then to help lead our church to align with the mission that he's given.

So as we seek to do that, what we find are four specific passages of Scripture in the Bible in which Jesus is specifically and explicitly commissioning and sending his church out on mission. And what we're going to see is that these specific passages of Scripture all take place around the same time, after Jesus' resurrection and immediately before Jesus left this earth and ascended to heaven. He's leaving his disciples, he's not going to be with them anymore, he's going away, so he's sending his church. He tells his disciples that while he's away, this is his mission I want you to give yourself to. This is the particular task and assignment I want you to fulfill and accomplish while I'm gone. I want us to look at these four passages of Scripture that explicitly unpack what the specific mission is that he gave to his disciples, and by extension, that he gives to us as the church today.

The first specific Scripture is in Matthew 28. This is the most familiar, most popular, most common one that we know as the great commission. Look at Matthew 28:18. Jesus is about to ascend back to heaven. He's no longer going to be with his disciples anymore, so while they remain on this earth, here's the specific mission that he is commissioning them out and sending them out to do and accomplish and to live on. Look at verse 18: **“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”** So he's about to ascend to heaven, leave his disciples while they remain here and there's one particular mission he is sending them on. He's telling them to go and to make disciples.

Then he explains to them two particular ways, the means by which they are to make disciples. He says, they are to go and make disciples by baptizing them, that's number one, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and secondly, by teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded.

Now flip over two books to the right to the gospel of Luke. We were in Luke for almost a year and a half, and so your Bible should just automatically fall open to the gospel of Luke. Look at

the last chapter there, Luke 24:45. Again, Jesus is about to leave, sent back to heaven, disciples are going to remain. He's going to tell them, here's what I want you to do. Here's the specific mission I'm sending you on while I'm away. Verse 45: **“Then he”**—talking about Jesus—**“opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are’**—or that can also be translated into you will be—**“witnesses of these things.”** That specific mission there that Jesus is giving to his disciples, they are to go to all the nations, proclaiming this message of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations and verbally bear witness of these things.

Look now to John 20:21. This is John's account of Jesus sending out his disciples on mission. Verse 21 says this, **“Jesus said to them”**—again, talking about his disciples—**“peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”** There's a whole lot that could be explained and unpacked within that verse, but the point I want to see is the particular task and mission that Jesus is sending his disciples into the world to do and to accomplish. He's sending them into the world with this message of forgiveness.

Go to Acts 1:8. Again, Jesus is about to leave, but before he does, this is what he says to his disciples, **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.”** And so Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit is going to come upon them and indwell them, and when the Holy Spirit does that, the Holy Spirit is going to cause them to open their mouths and begin to bear verbal witness for the things they have seen. To bear witness of Jesus' death and resurrection, which, when you read the rest of the book of Acts, that's exactly what you see the disciples and the church doing.

So those are the four different passages of Scripture. We see Jesus sending his disciples, commissioning his disciples out on mission, and by extension, commissioning us out on mission as well. And so when you put these four specific passages of Scripture together, we begin to get a glimpse of what the particular task and mission is that Jesus gave to his disciples and that by extension, Jesus gives to us as the church.

If I had to summarize these four passages of Scripture and what the mission of the church is, all that Jesus sent us into this world to do and to accomplish, that mission would be this: that the mission of the church, until the end of the age, is to go into all the world and through the

empowerment of the Spirit make disciples. That's the task. That's the mission. That's what we, as individual Christians and as a church, Cross Fellowship Church, it's the task, the assignment, the mission that Jesus has commissioned us out into this world to do and to accomplish. Just like the disciples, we've been sent here to make disciples. And we do that first by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. The keyword here, you might want to underline it, putting it in bold letters, putting hearts beside it, whatever you like to do there, the keyword there is proclaiming. This is the word that Jesus used in Luke 24, remember? He said repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations.

A couple verses later in Luke 24, Jesus says you will be witnesses of these things. In Acts 1:8 he says when the Holy Spirit comes and dwells within you, then you will be witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and the outer most parts of the earth, and within context there, that word witness is not just a reference to what they see. It's a reference to bearing verbal witness, it's like a witness at court. A witness at court bears verbal witness, explains, shares verbally the things they've seen. So the disciples, the church, is to go out and bear verbal witness of Jesus' death and resurrection. And that's the first part of the disciple making process. It's what we know as evangelism.

This is a huge point I want to make, and I think this is a huge point that Jesus makes within these four different passages of Scripture, that it's really important, especially in today's 21st century church world, it's really, really important for us to remember what evangelism is and what evangelism is not.

Evangelism is not living a good moral life around unbelievers.

Evangelism is not inviting an unbeliever to church.

Evangelism is not inviting a non-Christian over for dinner.

Evangelism is not praying for an unbeliever.

Evangelism is not serving or doing a good deed for an unbeliever.

Evangelism is not social justice or action.

Evangelism is not apologetics.

Now, I want to be perfectly clear so you don't misunderstand me. We should be doing all of these things. Does that make sense? We should be doing all of these things! All of these things are awesome. Like, two thumbs up. Yes! Devote yourself to these things, do these things. Everyone engage in these things. Yes and amen to all of that. Just don't ever call any of these things evangelism, because they're not. None of these things are evangelism. They're all good. This all falls under the umbrella of loving your neighbor. Some of them fall under the umbrella of mercy ministry and compassion ministry, and yes, and amen, do all of those things. Yes, just

make sure you give them the right label. Don't call them evangelism. Instead, what evangelism is, you see this on your handout here, and I stole this from David Platt, I'm sure he doesn't mind, but "evangelism is the verbal proclamation that the just and gracious God of the universe has looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His son Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show his power over sin in the resurrection so that all who have faith in Him will be reconciled to God forever." That's evangelism. It's the verbal, meaning with your lips, with your mouth, the verbal proclamation of the gospel. It's us being heralds. It's the king giving us a message and sending us out to herald, that we're going out and heralding the good news, proclaiming that Jesus has accomplished and secured victory for us, over sin and death, through his death and resurrection.

And you might wonder, why are you making such a big deal of this? Because it's so much easier to give ourselves to all these other things that I listed at the top and to think by doing that we're fulfilling the mission that Jesus gave us. And to think that we're doing evangelism. It's easy to put all of these other things under this big umbrella term of outreach and think as long as I'm doing all of these other things, I'm doing outreach, and that's good. Keep doing it. But at the same time, don't get so busy in all that that you never, ever take that other step and fulfill the mission that Jesus sent us into the world to do and to accomplish, which is the verbal proclamation of the gospel.

Which then leads to the second step. First we make disciples by proclaiming the gospel, and secondly, we make disciples by baptizing those who repent and believe. This is what Jesus says in Matthew 28, go and make disciples, and then he tells us how we are to do that, the means by which we are to do this. First, we are to make disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It's easy to think of baptism as just an optional step. It's easy to think of baptism as a hoop that somebody has to jump through in order to join a church. But for Jesus, baptism was an essential part of what it means to make disciples. We make disciples by proclaiming the gospel, then baptizing those who repent and believe. If you read all throughout the Book of Acts, this is exactly what you see them doing. They're proclaiming the gospel, then those who repent and believe, they baptize them. And the reason that's important is because baptism is the way that somebody initially expresses their profession of faith in Jesus.

Back then you didn't walk an aisle, sign a card, raise a hand at the end of a service. You got dunked in water and that's how you initially expressed your faith in Christ. It was the covenant sign, the identifying mark, the sign that you're a member of the new covenant. The identifying mark of a Christian in that day was that they had been baptized. In other words, in the New Testament day, there was no such thing or no category for an unbaptized Christian. That would

have been an oxymoron, they didn't know of such a person. Such a category didn't exist. You repent and believe. You express that faith through believers' baptism. With this baptism, what it symbolizes is our union with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and also that our former way of life has been put to death and that we've now been raised to walk in newness of life. So, we go and make disciples, the mission by proclaiming the gospel, baptizing those who repent and believe, and thirdly, we make disciples by teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded. Again, this is the great commission Matthew 28. Go therefore and make disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and then teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded.

So this makes sense, right? Somebody comes to faith in Christ. We don't just baptize them and hope you figure things out now. Hope you figure out how you grow on your own. Good luck! No. We proclaim the gospel. We baptize to those who repent and believe. We come alongside of them. We help teach them how to follow Jesus. We teach them how to observe and obey all that Jesus has commanded. So I want to get really practical here in terms of our church and what this looks like for us and specifically what's this look like for us that we're seeking to come alongside and teach others to observe and to obey all that Jesus has commanded? Or how we're trying to teach others how to follow Jesus. How we're trying to disciple and grow disciples and mature disciples within the life of our church.

There's a couple ways that we're trying to do that. When we think about growing disciples, maturing disciples, teaching others to obey and observe all that Jesus has commanded, as a church, we think about three areas that we're trying to grow and help people mature in. The first area, you see on the handout, is loving God supremely. We want to help members of our church to grow in loving God supremely. And what that involves are these things that I have listed beside there. First involves growing in the Word. Growing in their knowledge and understanding of the Word. Growing in reading and memorizing the Word. Studying and meditating on the Word. Growing in becoming a student of the Word, knowing how to study and interpret the Word. It involves growing in prayer, pursuing holiness, fighting sin, and addressing the heart idols in your life and in your heart. It involves growing in sound doctrine and biblical truth. All of these things are part of what we understand it means to grow in loving God supremely.

Second, we want to help people grow in loving one another humbly. By that, we're referring specifically to loving one another as brothers and sisters in Christ within the church. And so what's that look like? How do we want to help people to grow in loving one another humbly? Well, I've got a bunch of different characteristics listed out there that we're shooting and aiming for that we want to help the members of our church continue to grow in, in their relationships

with one another. We want to cultivate relationships with one another that are marked by humility, openness, transparency, unity, resolving conflict with each other, serving and caring for one another, showing hospitality to one another, opening up our homes and lives to each other, living in accountability in our relationships with one another where we're watching over and watching out for one another, taking responsibility for each other's spiritual growth and spiritual well-being, and we want to disciple one another and help each other follow Jesus.

And then finally, we want to help every member to grow in loving the world sacrificially. So loving God's supremely. Loving one another humbly. And loving the world sacrificially. And what that means for us are two things in particular. Number one is engaging in the lives of unbelievers in the different spheres of influence where God has placed us. That looks like a whole lot of different things from different people, from serving those that are in need among us, to mercy ministries, to social justice issues to hospitality and inviting your neighbors and coworkers for dinner, all sorts of ideas to lovingly engage in the lives of you know unbelievers in our different spheres of influence. So engage. And then secondly, to evangelize in our different spheres of influence. Verbally sharing, verbally proclaiming the gospel. That's the portrait, if you want to think about it like that, if you're one of those artistic sort of people, it's kind of a picture, a portrait. That's kind of the bull's-eye, the target, the goal. You might not know that, but every single one of you here, it's what we're aiming for, for all of us. To grow, to teach, to come alongside, to help mature, all of us into this picture of loving God supremely in these specific ways, loving one another humbly in these specific ways, loving the world sacrificially in these specific ways. This isn't a moralistic to-do list. Instead, all of these things are compelled and fueled by and driven by the realities and the truths and the promises of the gospel.

And so the way that we then seek to do that is in four different contexts. Here are the four different contexts in which we want to help people to grow as disciples are compelled by the gospel to love God supremely, one another humbly, and the world sacrificially. In the first context we're seeking to do this is in our worship gatherings. So like this morning. Our focus in our worship gatherings is on teaching the Word. So we gather together every Sunday morning to read the Word, to pray the Word, to preach the Word, to sing the Word, to demonstrate the Word and the Lord's Supper. All of those have a teaching component to them, right? When we pray the Word together, just like Kevin did, we're teaching one another, demonstrating for one another how to pray and what to pray and what kinds of prayers to pray. The songs we sing, they teach doctrine, theology, and truth about who God is. Preaching teaches the Word and teaches us how to study and handle the Word and on and on and on. So in our worship gatherings, our focus is teaching the Word.

The next context is what we call our Equipping Seminars or classes. Our focus here is training

in the Word. We haven't offered these for a while now to focus on some other areas in the life of our church, but this is something we're working on intentionally right now to be able to bring back hopefully sometime this year. But a classroom/seminar sort of context within the life of our church in which we provide more in-depth, biblical, theological, formal training. Some of the things that we've offered in the past are things like how to study the Bible, doctrine of God, doctrine of the Bible and things of that nature. This year we're hoping to make a lot of changes and tweaks to what we've done in the past in regards to exactly what that looks like, to be more effective when it comes to training, particularly with that specific context.

Third context, then, we want to grow disciples in what we call our discipleship communities. Our focus there is applying the Word. This makes sense, right? Remember Matthew 28? Jesus doesn't say teach them everything that I have commanded you. He says teach them to observe or teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. In other words, don't just fill their minds with a bunch of knowledge and information. But I want you to teach them and fill their minds for the purpose of observing, obeying, and living out everything that I have commanded you. The purpose of our discipleship communities is application focused. It's a context not just so we can have a Bible study and fill our minds, it's a context that we can gather together groups of disciples, members of our church together, to live out and practice and do in application. To apply the truths of the Word that we're learning and growing in at our worship gatherings and equipping seminars to live out, practice, and do those together in communities as disciples together.

So we mention this a couple different times over the last month or so. We're making some pretty significant changes when it comes to our discipleship communities. As many of you know, most of our discipleship communities are too large, and because of that, they've kind of defeated the purpose for why discipleship communities exist in the first place. They're too big and not a manageable size for leaders of those groups. If you are a leader of a discipleship community it can be pretty overwhelming. Secondly, the groups are too big for the real discipling and biblical community that we are wanting to see happen within those groups. And because of that we're in the process of raising up more leaders and trying to begin new groups within the future, to be able to make those discipleship communities more manageable, which then will better fulfill the purpose for why DCs exist in the first place.

Our plan, then, is to shut down all of our current DCs at the end of February. In March, we're going to meet together on Wednesday nights, corporately as a church, in place of our DCs. We're going to provide some teaching explanation, training, vision casting for our new DCs and what our new DCs will look like when they begin in April. Then at the very beginning of April we're going to start a lot more DCs with a lot more leaders. So we'll talk more about that, but I'm

super pumped and excited about the leaders, the groups, a lot of tweaks and changes we're making to our DCs, and how they'll better fulfill this purpose of applying the Word and helping us to raise up and grow disciples who love God supremely, one another humbly, and the world sacrificially. We'll share more about that in the weeks ahead.

Fourth context in seeking to grow disciples, is in our personal discipling relationships. Our focus here is coming alongside another brother or sister in Christ and personally helping them to grow in the word, so this is organic. This is relational. This is just one member of our church coming alongside another member of our church and formally or informally seeking to help them and encourage each other mutually in growing together and living and growing as a disciple of Jesus. This is happening all around us. We know of ladies getting together during the morning of the week, grabbing coffee together and just encouraging one another as they continue to walk with Jesus. Sharing sins, struggles, memorizing verses together. I know of guys meeting together for lunch, studying a book of the Bible together. I know of other ladies gathering during the week, doing a Bible study together on Friday mornings.

Those organic relationships through our church are happening all over the place. This isn't something you'll find on our website. This isn't something you'll find on the back of the worship guide in the announcements. This isn't a church-sponsored event or activity, instead it's just a member coming alongside of another member and they're trying to help each other follow Jesus and become more conformed to his image together. I love how this is happening all over the place in the life of our church. You don't need permission to do this. You didn't need to ask the elders, can I do this? Go do it! I remember, there's a lady within our church who'd been a member of our church maybe two years and I remember talking with her and she was asking permission to do this and thought she had to ask the elders before she could go do that. Like no, go. Grab somebody. Open the Word. Disciple each other. Spend time with one another. Encourage each other. Yes, amen to all that.

So, take a step back. This right there, that's the mission of the church. It's the mission of every single one of our lives that Jesus has sent us into this world, sent us into this city to make disciples by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus, baptizing those who repent and believe, and teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded.

Really practical then what this looks like for our lives in this church. This coming week, we're all leaving this room, dispersing out of here, going to different contexts and spheres of influence. Workplaces, neighborhoods, social settings, our homes, other contexts in which we have different responsibilities. And we're going there engaging in the lives of those who don't know Jesus. Loving them, serving them, hosting them, whatever that might look like, and in the midst

of that, we're looking at ways to weave the gospel in our conversations with them, sow seeds of the gospel, proclaim verbally the truth of the gospel with them. And as we're doing that we're praying that some of them would come to repent and believe. And as they do, then we're pulling out the horse trough and right back there, where those chairs are, we're gathering around there and we're baptizing them. We're baptizing them on a Sunday morning as they're expressing their union and demonstrating their union with Jesus and his death, burial, and resurrection.

But after that, we don't just say, okay. Now we're going to come alongside of them. We're going to seeing to teach them to obey and observe all that Jesus has commanded. So then we invite them, they continue to keep coming on Sunday mornings and they're continuing to hear the Word and be taught the Word. The Word is being sung and the Word is being read and the Word's being prayed and the Word's being preached and demonstrating the Lord's Supper. And then they attend an Equipping Seminar and now they're being trained in the Word and they're growing in their understanding and their knowledge of the Word. Then they join a discipleship community with other members within our church and now they're living in community with other brothers and sisters in Christ within our church who are living together, living out what it means to be a disciple together. They're loving God supremely together. They're loving one another humbly together. They're loving the world sacrificially together.

And as all this is going on, then there's a member of our church, who reached out, "Hey, you want to get coffee? What about if we start meeting together?" And this person starts discipling them. They're walking through a book together, memorizing verses together, praying together, pursuing holiness together, sharpening each other in this discipleship relationship. As all of this is going on, guess what happens? This person was just months ago as an unbeliever, they're baptizing, involved in these different contexts of discipling within the life of our church, teaching, training, applying, personally being invested in. As all of that's going on, they're slowly but surely maturing and loving God supremely. They begin to read the Word each day. Begin to memorize Scripture. They begin to grow in their understanding and their knowledge of God's Word. They begin to pray. They begin to really get serious about fighting sin and pursue holiness in their lives. They begin to fight and address heart idols in their hearts. They begin to grow in sound doctrine and biblical truth. That's not all. They begin to love others humbly. They begin to selflessly humble themselves in their relationships with others. They begin to reconcile relationships that were divided. They begin to live in unity, to put the interest of others ahead of their own and they begin to give up Saturdays to serve and care for people. They begin to live in mutual accountability with others and to take responsibility for the spiritual growth and well-being of others.

And then before long, they begin to love the world sacrificially. They begin to engage in the lives

of unbelievers. As they're engaging in the lives of unbelievers in the different spheres of influence God has placed them, they begin to open their mouth and verbally share the gospel with others. And as they do that, guess what? Then somebody comes, hears from them the gospel they shared. And they repent and believe. Then we get out the horse trough again. We baptize them. And then that process just repeats itself. Over and over and over and over again. This is why we're here. This is why you're here. This is why we gather together. And this is why we scatter together outside of here during the week. That's the mission of the church. This is the mission of our church. The mission of our church is to make disciples, to make disciples, to make disciples, to make disciples, to make disciples.

And as we do that there are three truths we need to remember as we give ourselves to this mission of making disciples. First truth is this. We need to remember that we don't go on mission based on our own authority. Instead, we go on this mission based on the authority of Christ. This is the Great Commission, this is Matthew 28. Remember how that begins? Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore," meaning, in light of the authority that I've been given, you go and make disciples. What that means is, we don't go and make disciples based on our own authority. We don't have any authority. We go and make disciples based on the authority of the one who has all authority. The one who has all authority over everything, he's told us to go, so we go on his behalf. We go representing him. We go based on his authority. There isn't anything inside of us that gives us the authority to go and proclaim the gospel to anybody. There isn't anything inside of us that would give us the authority to come alongside another believer and say let me disciple you. There's nothing inside of us that makes us special or gives us the authority to do anything of those things. The only authority that we have to go and make disciples who proclaim the gospel and baptize those who believe and teach others to observe all that Jesus has commanded, the only reason we have any authority to do that is because we have a delegated authority. It's because the one who has all authority has sent us to do it.

The second truth we need to remember is this: We don't go on this mission by our own power, we go on this mission by the power of the Spirit. This is Acts 1:8, right? Jesus says, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea, the outermost parts of the earth." This is comforting, isn't it? If this is up to us and our own strengths and our own power and our own ability, we wouldn't stand a chance. If it's up to us to conjure up the willpower to do this mission and live on this mission and be faithful to this mission we don't stand a chance. But it's not up to our power, so he's indwelt us with the Spirit to empower us to proclaim and baptize and teach so we don't go by our own strength, we go by the Spirit and power.

Third and finally, we don't go on this mission by ourselves. We go on this mission with the presence of Christ. This is so good to remember. Jesus didn't send us on this mission and then just say, "Hey, when you're done, come back and report to me how it went." He sends us on this mission and says "Lo and behold, I'm going to be with you always." He sends us on this mission and he goes with us on this mission. So as we give ourselves to this mission, in the city and the world in which we live, to make disciples by proclaiming, baptizing, and teaching, we can take great comfort that we go based on the authority of Jesus. We don't go based upon our own power. We go in the power of the Spirit and we don't go by ourselves. We don't go alone. Instead, we go with the presence of Christ.

Let me pray for us. Lord, thank you for today and for this mission that you have given to us as your church. Lord, I pray, Lord, that this would be more than just a mission statement. I pray that it would be more than a slogan. Lord, I pray that it would be true and real. I pray that it would be the passion and the mission of our lives individually and the passion and mission of our church corporately. Lord, I pray that we would see and we would realize and know that you have let us here to not simply just twiddle our thumbs, to not just live our best life now, to not just live the American dream, to not just live a hunky-dory life that is void of difficulty and heartache, but that we would see that you have let us here to do something and that something is to make disciples. You have shown us and taught us and instructed us on how to do that, and so Lord, I pray that we would give all we have to that end. That we would not waste our lives, that we would not waste our time, but that we would intentionally and strategically and wholeheartedly give all of ourselves to the task that you have entrusted to us as your church, and we do all of this for the glory and for the name of Christ and it's his name we pray, amen.