

The Mission of Jesus For Every Life

What is the mission of Jesus in your life? What did he come to make happen in you and for you? He tells us very clearly what that is, through the mission he gave to Paul. “I am sending you to them, to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

This is Christ’s mission in your life, in every life! Benjamin Warfield called this verse “the summation of the gospel”.

If our teaching and our message lacks any of those elements it is not really the gospel of Jesus. For example if our message does not turn people from darkness to light or from the power of Satan to the power of God, then it is not the gospel of Jesus.

The mission of Jesus in your life is to turn you from one thing, to something drastically different! Being a Christian is a complete shift in realities, old things are passed away, behold all things are made new! Salvation is not a small adjustment to our lives and our schedules. It is not giving Jesus some space in your life once or twice a week. It is the most complete total transformation that a person can ever go through.

As Jesus himself said, it is being blind and then being able to see. It is living in complete darkness then coming into the light of knowing God. It is being under the power and tyranny of Satan and then being released from that to God and the power of His Spirit. It is being burdened down with true guilt before God and then being released from our sins! It is being unclean and unholy, and then being made holy and pure for God’s use, through faith in Jesus.

It is important to understand this gospel change for our own lives, so we wholly give ourselves over to this radical transforming work of God in us. If we think the gospel is only accepting Jesus as a means of going to heaven someday, we are missing much of the gospel. And we will probably not live that much differently than we always have! And not must different than most everyone else! If we think being a Christian is basically as a way to affirm ourselves, or a way to feel better about ourselves, or a way to help us reach our own goals, we are missing out on the true and deep healing the gospel brings, and which our souls desperately need!

It is also important to understand this so we know what true ministry to others looks like and sounds like. This verse gives us our message for others. It shows us how to pray for others. It informs us of what we should be working for in others lives.

I recently read about a guy who had embezzled hundreds of thousands of dollars from his company. He starting dating a Christian girl, and then started going to her church, and started going to all the church activities, playing on the church softball team, and going to all the activities for youth, immersing himself in church culture and hanging out with Christians. He did stop embezzling, and that's good. But I couldn't help but wonder where was person who would seek to open his eyes to Jesus, to turn him from the power of Satan to the power of God!

Christians can play softball together or go shopping together or go out for coffee together, and that can all be good. But our mission is to get people away from Satan and bring them to God! Our mission is to bring them into a place of forgiveness of sins and release from

sins, a place of being part of God's holy ones, set apart as holy people for God through faith in Jesus. Of course none of that can be done without the Holy Spirit! And none of this can happen without each person personally trusting in Jesus. But we are the instruments of these effects.

Let's look at each of these components of Jesus' mission:

First: Christ's mission is to open our eyes! Jesus told Paul to "open their eyes". Our first need is to "see" things that we didn't see before. We need to understand "spiritual things" we didn't understand before. We need to have eyes to see "unseen things" that once did not matter to us, or that we didn't even know were there.

In our lost condition the Bible says, our minds are blinded by the god of this world. We don't see the realities of God's kingdom. We don't see the reality of our own condition or our great need of Christ. We don't see the power of the cross to save us. We don't see the glory of Christ. First and foremost, we must pray for open eyes, for ourselves and others.

When Christ opens our eyes, and we begin to see what Paul called "the things of the Spirit". We see that we have sins that need forgiveness, we see that Christ is able and willing to be our Savior. We see in Jesus all that would satisfy the thirst and hungers of our soul. We see him as a treasure of supreme value. We see in him the unfathomable love of God for us.

Fanny Crosby was blind all her life, yet she wrote hymns, many of them spoke of seeing things. "Blessed assurance Jesus is mine, O what a foretaste of glory divine....Perfect submission, perfect delight, Vision of rapture now burst on my my sight. Angels

descending, bring from above echos of mercy, whispers of love....Watching and waiting looking above...filled with his goodness, lost in his love”.

All this is a work of the Holy Spirit, who opens our eyes to see and understand these things. Paul said, “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” But that is no longer true of us! A Christian is one who does see the light and the glory of Jesus. In him, we see God!!

Second: The second thing Jesus told Paul to do was, “to turn them from darkness to light”. To be a Christian is to come out of a place of darkness and into a place of light. 1 Peter 2:9 says the Lord “called us out of darkness into his marvelous light”. In this new place, our very own lives become light instead of dark! Eph. 5:8, “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord”.

Darkness describes misery, despair and depression and hopelessness. Darkness describes all sin and evil. Jesus said, Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. Ephesians 5:11 tells us to have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, referring to sexual immorality, greed, obscenity, rage and anger and malice.

Darkness also describes the state of “hardened hearts” and views of life that leave out God. Paul said, “They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.” Atheism is dark, new age spiritualism is dark, all thinking about life without Christ is dark, the values and beliefs of our culture are

mostly dark! True gospel work turns people to from all that is dark, to all that is light!

Light speaks of purity, and goodness, and hope and joy. God is light, There is nothing in God that is dark and foreboding, or twisted, or evil. As James says “every good and perfect gift” comes from the Father of lights. Light speaks of illumination, understanding what is true. Light expels our spiritual ignorance and all the thoughts and ideas we have that are raised up against the true knowledge of God.

Third: Christ mission is to turn us from the power of Satan to the power of God. All human beings apart from Christ are wired to Satan and his power and energy. There is a real flow of power at work in people. Hardly anyone is aware of that but that is reality.

We were too! Paul wrote to Christians at Ephesus, “You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— . The Contemporary English Version puts it like this, “You followed the ways of this world and obeyed the devil. He rules the world, and his spirit has power over everyone who doesn't obey God.”

Most children, growing up in Christian or non-Christian homes look a lot the same, but as they reach the age of making moral and spiritual choices, it becomes more evident which power is dominant in their lives. Young person here today, you will have to consciously chose to turn to God’s power in your life. Satan’s power is the default position and you will automatically go to that unless you turn to God.

Gil said, Satan has power, “over the souls of men, in whom he rules as in his own kingdom: he is the strong man armed, and the hearts of men are his palaces, (Where he has power) there is no concern about sin, no inquiry after salvation, no dread of the curses of the law, nor fear of hell... (and they live) in the utmost security: and he not only DWELLS in the hearts of unregenerate persons, but he WORKS effectually there; by stirring up corruptions, putting ill things into their minds.... they are led by him as captives at his will; they are in his power, as the bird is in the snare of the fowler, and as a prisoner in the hands of a jailer;”

The goal of the gospel is to turn us from that power to God’s power. Christianity is a religion of power! It is more than that, of course. But the very essence of being a Christian is coming into living contact with the power of God. Paul said, “The kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power!” Paul said, “when I come, I will find out whether these people are all talk or whether they really have God’s power.” The power of God in a person’s life verifies there a real connection with God..or not.

“Jesus replied, “Your mistake is that you don’t know the Scriptures, and you don’t know the power of God.”” Matthew 22:29 This is still the fundamental needs of all people.

That is why the apostles turned people immediately to the Holy Spirit when they believed in Jesus. The pattern in Acts is people believed in Jesus, they were baptized in water, baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings power to be filled with joy, with hope, to worship and give thanks, to be witnesses, to be a blessing to the body of Christ.

Under the influence and the power of God, we desire God, we love God, we trust God, we want to do his will. We want to please him. He gives us a new heart, with new powers at work in us, for goodness, for joy, for kindness, for love, and forgiveness toward others. He gives strength to rejoice in trials, and so much more!

Fourth: Christ's mission to us is that we might "receive forgiveness of sins". Acts 3:19 "Repent and turn to God that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord!". Complete forgiveness of all your sins, whatever you have done, is a free gift of God based on the blood of Jesus shed for your sins. It is received. You simply open your hands in faith and receive. And knowing you have that brings peace and joy and comfort and confidence to live life with God without fear!

"How happy are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. How happy is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them." This is the blessing Christ wants you to receive!

Fifth: Jesus told Paul, "turn people to God so they might be included among those who are sanctified by faith in ME. This is Jesus's desire for you. JFB called this receiving "admission to the home of the sanctified". By faith in Jesus, your home now is with the saints.

To be sanctified means to be set apart for special use, or to be made holy. It has two clear aspects. First, we are sanctified or set apart for Christ, in a once for all time sort of way, through faith in his blood. In this sense, once we believe, we are already in a state of holiness, we are already saints or holy ones (and can call each other that). As in justification, we are credited with the holiness of Christ.

You are no longer common, or profane, but you are set apart for special use, for God own use.

But we are also in a continuous process of BEING sanctified by faith in Christ, through the work of the Spirit in us. The Spirit is leading and influencing us toward the image of Christ. In this sense, we actually become holy in our daily living, with a holiness, that we did not have before. We go from actually being an unholy person, to being a holy person. It is in this sense that Hebrews says, without holiness no one will see the Lord.

We are set apart from sin and self in our daily living, through our connection of love and trust in Jesus. Faith in Jesus WILL make this practical change in us. His sanctifying life is in us!

So how did Paul bring people to this place of light and power and forgiveness and sanctification? He tells us in verse 19, Paul said, I was not disobedient the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, “that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.”

Repentance begins with admitting that you have been turned away from God. It is turning from sin and self and what ever else has absorbed your attention. Turn from darkness to light from Satan to God turn to God to have your sins washed away, to be included among the saints through faith in Jesus. Do that here, today!

But this is not just for those people out there or for that time in our life years ago where we turned to God. The whole Christian life is a life turned toward God. We turn to God with our whole life, our

mind our thoughts, we keep him before us, we give him our attention, we submit our will to him. And then we show that is what we have done by what comes out of us, in our words, our attitudes, our deeds to others.