

The Teachings Of Jesus: Lesson 9

Our Mission

Memory Text: Matt. 24:14 – “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

Illustration/Setting The Stage: Nothing unites people like a compelling mission. On April 12, 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person to fly in space, reinforcing American fears about being left behind in a technological competition with the Soviet Union.

Kennedy was eager for the U.S. to take the lead in the “space race” for reasons of strategy and prestige. He first announced the goal of landing a man on the Moon in the speech to a Joint Session of Congress on May 25, 1961, stating: "First, I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish."

Kennedy made a speech at Rice University on September 12, 1962, in which he said: "No nation which expects to be the leader of other nations can expect to stay behind in this race for space. ... We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard." Kennedy rallied the nation. The mission was so inspiring that a janitor working at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, said, “I’m helping to put a man on the moon.” 6 years after Kennedy’s assassination, on July 20, 1969 the first manned spacecraft landed on the Moon. The mission was accomplished.

Most successful business and companies carry a clear mission statement. Apple – “The best computing experience through innovative hardware, software, and

internet offerings.” Google – “To organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful.” Ritz-Carlton – “The genuine care and comfort of our guests.” Amazon – “Every book, ever printed, in any language, all available in less than 60 seconds.” Sony – “Change the worldwide image of Japanese products as being of poor quality.” Nike – “Crush Adidas.”

Does the church have one? Yes! Jesus said, “Go into all the world and make disciples.” During His life He was preparing His church with this mission. He called Peter and Andrew (fishers of men). Later He appointed 12 disciples to go and preach. He then sent out the 12 then the 70 to evangelize. During the 40 days after His resurrection He placed the responsibility of preaching the gospel in their hands.

While not one gospel writer recorded everything Jesus had to say about the mission of the church, each gospel account emphasizes a different aspect of the commission giving us a whole picture from which to work. We’ll look at what Jesus said on this subject.

Sunday – To Be The Light Of The World

Matthew 5:14-16

Matt. 5:14-16. There’s nothing better than light. On the first day of creation God said, “Let there be light,” because darkness covered the face of the deep. Light is indispensable to life. God is the source of life, therefore the source of light (1 John 1:5). Because of the close relation between God and light the Bible writers often used light to symbolize things like truth, knowledge, and godliness. John said of Jesus that He was “the light of men” (John 1:4) and speaking of Himself He said He is the “light of the world.” (John 8:12; 9:5)

Early in Jesus ministry Christ spelled out His followers role in the world. They were to be the light of the world. Israel was also called to shine for Jesus. It’s always been God’s plan for His people to light this dark world.

Isa. 60:1-3: “Arise, shine; for your light has come and the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”

John 12:36: “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.

So we are called to light this world. What does that mean? **First, what is light?** Light is radiant energy, also known as electromagnetic radiation. It is “the natural agent that stimulates sight and makes things visible.”

What does it mean to be the light of the world? Two things:

As lights we are intended to *illuminate* – Candlesticks of Rev. 1 - Darkness envelopes the world, but the light of Christ’s love reflected in our lives is to penetrate that darkness. It’s been rightly said, “He who would shine as a light must burn.” No candle can give light without the wax being consumed.

As lights we are *illustrious* and *conspicuous* (Matthew Henry Commentary) – city set on a hill (like the many homes dotting the hills of ancient Palestine) - Hearst Castle, home of William Randolph Hearst the newspaper publisher, was a “city” set on a hill.

The light is the “good works” we perform. We will explore those good works as we proceed. But for now Jesus begins to outline the mission for His followers to undertake. And those good works are to draw people, not to me, but to Christ.

Monday – To Be Witnesses

Luke 24:46-48; Isaiah 43:10

When I think of a witness I think of someone who has been called to court to testify for or against the defendant. A witness is someone who has seen an event. If you've seen a car accident happen right before your eyes, then you witnessed it.

Christ has called His people to be His witnesses. **Luke 24:46-48** - You and me, rescued sinners, have the privilege of telling other about what Jesus has done *and* is doing for us.

Done – He saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now I'm found. I was blind but now I see. He loved me while I rejected him. He pleaded with me all the while I turned a deaf ear. I treated His creation with disdain and disrespect while He treated me with respect and grace. He died for me while I was His enemy.

Doing – It's not enough to just to recount what Christ has done for us, but to also witness to what He is doing for us now. I woke up this morning. He gave me a loving wife and great children. I work for Him. He answered my prayer. He comforted me when I was hurting. He lives for me, interceding for me in heaven above.

Our witness changes lives. It did for me. I wanted what he had.

Tuesday – So Send I You

Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; John 20:21, 22

What is the relationship between receiving the Holy Spirit and witnessing for Christ?

Luke 24:49: “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Acts 1:8: “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.”

John 20:21, 22: “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

Acts 4:33: “And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.”

Without the Holy Spirit our witness would be diluted, without convincing power – Having the Holy Spirit would bring Christ even closer than if He were here in person – Referring to John 20:21, our commission is a continuation of Christ’s ministry which was a complete ministry (Matt. 9:35 – teach, preach, heal).

Wednesday – To Make Disciples

Matt. 28:19, 20

A disciple is a follower or student of a teacher. In the biblical sense, a disciple is a follower and imitator of Jesus. As He made disciples, we do too. We work on the plan of addition, while He works on the plan of multiplication.

Matt. 28:18-20. Four verbs – go, make, baptize, teach. “Make” is the only imperative meaning the other three are dependent on it. Jesus mandate involves three activities involved in making disciples, which are very important aspects of discipleship.

Thursday – To Preach The Gospel

Mark 16:15, Matt. 24:14; Rev. 14:6-12

The gospel according to Mark presents the commission in conciseness and clarity.

Mark 16:15: “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach [“Kerusso” – to proclaim aloud, to announce, to preach] the gospel to every creature.” Not just to Israel anymore but to the entire world, which begs the participation of the entire church.

What gospel and to how many people? See Revelation 14:6-12 - everlasting gospel with 3 vital points.

Will the work get done? Jesus said, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matt. 24:14)

“The Saviour's commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ.” (Desire of Ages, p. 822)

Appeal: We have a world to win for Christ and we need the power of the Holy Spirit to help get the job done. Let's open our hearts to receive more of Him today.