

Abide

The Disciple's Mission
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September 23, 2007



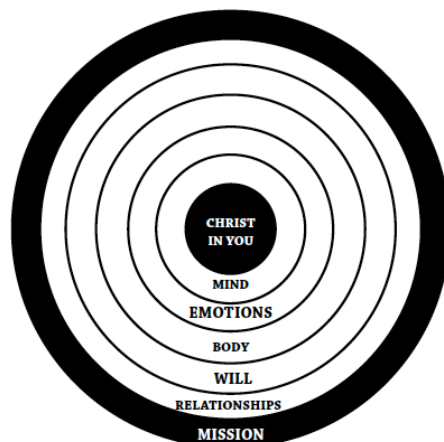
**The Disciple's Mission
Matthew 9:35-10:4**

Praise the Lord! The light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at home. Serving in Honduras... That we have our perspective on the people that live right down the street from us transformed. As God puts His heart for the world in us, it radically changes our perspective on the people who live right around us. And we realize that it is not about this mission either here or there. It is here and there. It is not longer Birmingham or the nations. It is Birmingham and the nations. We want them all for His glory. And that is the picture that God is doing, He is playing out here. It is why every small group from The Church at Brook Hills, every single small group is a part of this mission here in Birmingham and around the world. Both and, making disciples here and around the world.

If you have a Bible and I hope you do, let me invite you to open it with me to Galatians 1. I couldn't decide between two texts to preach on this morning and so we are going to hit both of them. Don't get scared. We are not going to be in Galatians 1 for very long. We are just going to look at that and let that vault us into Matthew 9. But I want us to start in Galatians 1.

Why Is Christ In You?

Over the last two weeks, we have seen the truth of what it means to be in Christ and Christ to be in us. I pray that God by His grace would enable us to experience the reality of those two glorious truths. What it means to be in Christ and Christ to be in us. The question that I want to ask this morning though is, "Why has God put Christ in you? Why has God put Christ in us?" And what you see there in your notes is the circles that we started looking at last week. And you see in the middle is a picture of Christ in you. And how Christ infiltrates everything about who we are. He affects our mind and our emotions and body and our will and our relationships.



Over the next five weeks we are going to unpack this. How does Christ affect the way we think and affect the way we feel, affect the way we act, our body and our will, and affect our relationships?

But what I want us to do this morning is look at that outer circle, the picture of mission. And I want us to ask the question, "Why does Christ affect our mind and our emotions, our body and our will and our relationships?" And He does it for a reason. Because He wants to use all of you; all of who you are—your mind, your emotions, your body, your will, your relationships, your friendships, your marriages, your parenting. He wants to use every facet of you to display His glory to all the world. He has a purpose for being in you.

And I want you to see that unfold in Galatians 1. Two simple verses that are so key for understanding our Christianity. We are going to come in on a part of the conversation where Paul is describing how he came to faith in Christ. And listen to what he says in verse 15. He says, "*When God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased...*"—listen to this—"*[God] was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that...*"—here is the purpose clause—"*So that I might preach him among the Gentiles*" (Gal. 1:15-16).

Christ Is In You For Them

Did you catch that? Paul said God in His grace was pleased to reveal His Son in me, to put Christ in me for a purpose; so that I would proclaim Him to the nations. Why, Paul? Why has God saved you? Why has God brought you into Christ. And Paul says that, "He has done it so I can proclaim Christ and show Christ and declare Christ to the world around me." This is the reason for why Christ is in us. He is in us for a purpose and in us for a mission.

In your notes you have got there... And this is kind of the theme that is going to drive our study of the text this morning. Christ is in you for them. Christ is in you for them. For their sake and them referring to those who do not know Christ. The nations, the people in your sphere of influences on a daily basis and the people in the Middle East and everywhere in between, Christ is in you for them.

With that picture, I want us to go back to the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew 9. And I want us to look at an amazing passage of Scripture. It is a heart rendering passage of Scripture that gives us a glimpse into Jesus' heart that is life transforming. And as you are turning there, Matthew 9 we are going to start in verse 35, I want you to know the context because the context is so important.

Matthew 3, Jesus is baptized. Matthew 4, He is tempted. Basically end of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, He begins His ministry. And His ministry revolves around teaching and preaching and healing people. That is what verse 35 actually tells us. He went throughout all these places, preaching and teaching and healing people of every disease. That is what we have seen up unto this point in Matthew. Matthew 5-7 He is teaching—the Sermon on the Mount. Then in Matthew 8 and 9 you see Him preaching the good news and healing people, just kind of back and forth.

And this is a transition point in the entire book of Matthew because it is at this point that we basically get a summary of what Jesus has been doing. And then in chapter 10 what Jesus does is He sends out His disciples. And you know what He sends out His disciples to do? He sends them out to do the exact same thing He had been doing. He says, "You go out and

you teach and you preach and you heal.” And what we see here in this transition point in the book of Matthew is an astonishing parallel between Jesus and His disciples.

Jesus is teaching and preaching and healing and then He sends out His disciples and they teach and preach and heal. And the picture is, Jesus is doing all of His work through them. And He is enabling them to do all these things, to teach and to preach and to heal. It is a picture of the fact that Christ came to enable us, His people, those who followed after Him to do what He did.

This is why He needed to go to heaven to send His Spirit to live in us, for Christ to be in us, so that we would do exactly what He did. And so when we reach this text, Matthew 9:35 and following, I want you to realize that the picture that you are going to see here of Christ is the same Christ who dwells inside of you if you have trusted in Christ, if you are a follower of Christ. This is the Christ whose heart is in you. So keep that in mind and listen to what it says. Verse 35:

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’

He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him (Matt. 9:35-10:4).

This is an amazing text of Scripture that gives us a glimpse into the heart of Christ for people who do not know the Father. The same heart of Christ that He has put in each and every one of us. So when Christ is in us, how does that affect the way we view the world around us?

Your life is now consumed by the love of Christ for them.

Number 1: When Christ is in you, your life is now consumed by the love of Christ for them. Your life is now consumed by the love of Christ for people who do not know the Father. It is as if the Holy Spirit is opening up the heart of Christ just to give us a picture here. It says, “*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them*” (Matt. 9:36). And this is such a rich word. What is really interesting about this word, is throughout the New Testament it is used nine different times, but what is interesting is every single time that it is used, it is used to talk about the compassion of Christ. It is never used, not once, it is not used to describe the compassion of anybody else but Christ.

So this word is unique to Christ in the New Testament. It is a compassion that He had. And there is a picture here for us. The compassion of Christ is not something that comes naturally to any one of us. This is not something that we automatically have. The compassion of Christ is something that He puts in us that flows from us. It only can come from Him as the source. So I want you to see how His compassion plays out. How does His compassion affect us? How does it consume us?

First of all, in Christ we see the size of the multitudes. We see the size of the multitudes. When He saw the crowds, when He saw the masses of people. I was in one city last week where the city is comprised of different hills and there is one that is higher, basically a mountain in the middle and you can stand at the top of that mountain and you can look and in a circle you can literally see the whole city here in this country in the Middle East. You can see houses and houses and houses all across these hilltops. You can literally see the 1.2 million people in this city.

And to realize as you look out over that city that 80-90% of them have never once personally heard that Jesus died on a cross for their sins. It was one of the most if not the most vast pictures of spiritual darkness that I have ever seen. And the only thing that I can compare it to is some cities in India where there is just millions and millions of people but the difference was in those cities that I was in India, we could share the gospel. In this particular city as soon as we share the gospel with one person who is a Muslim, we would be arrested and deported from the country.

And so to see the vast spiritual darkness and to know that it is illegal to take the gospel to them and to know that they join a host of over a billion other people, a billion other people in the world who don't personally have a time when they have heard the gospel.

God help us to see the size of the multitudes. Four times the population of the United States of America has never once had someone share the gospel with them. God help us to see their size.

Hudson Taylor, missionary from England to China, said this. "How can all the Christians in England sit still with folded arms while these multitudes are perishing, perishing for lack of knowledge, for lack of that knowledge which England possesses so richly?" God help us to see their size, to see the masses who haven't even heard His name.

In Christ we feel the suffering of the multitudes. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them. Why? "*Because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd*" (Matt. 9:36) And the picture here is rich. Why did He have compassion? Because they were harassed and helpless. And it literally says, "He was moved with compassion." This is more than just an intellectual or a mental compassion, knowing something was wrong. It is an emotional, literally, a physical feeling of compassion.

It is the same thing that we see in John 11 when Lazarus had died and He comes and He sees Mary and Martha weeping. And it says, "He was deeply moved in spirit. He was troubled and He began to weep with them." It is the same picture that we see in Luke 19 when Jesus comes to the top of a mountain and looks over the whole city of Jerusalem for the last time before He goes in and is crucified and it says, "He saw the city," and Luke 19:42 says, "He wept." Why did He weep? Why was He so moved? Because they were harassed and helpless. Those are two rich words.

I'm guessing amidst the different translations that are across this room, we have got almost different translations for those two words in every single different translation that is represented in this room. NIV says, "Harassed and helpless." The New American Standard says, "Distressed and downcast." King James says, "Fainted and scattered abroad." One says, "Mangled and thrown to the ground," "distracted and dejected," "bewildered and miserable." Basically this word "harassed", literally means, "to be distressed" or "troubled", literally, "to be torn apart". And the picture of helpless is literally, "to be thrown down", to be "utterly weak"; "without anything". That is how Jesus perceived the crowds.

Now this is so huge. This is so huge to see Jesus' response to the suffering of the crowds. When He saw the crowds because He knew, He knew that all of these people had sin in their lives, sin that separated them from the Father. But I want you to see His reaction. His reaction is not just indignation toward their sin. His reaction is compassion for their suffering that is there as a result of their sin. And this is big. This is really big.

Let me ask you a question. When you think of people in the Middle East, what images come to your mind? I am guessing we are immediately seeing images from CNN and Fox News and we think of terrorists and we think of evil, bad people, those who live in constant conflict, who make trouble, people to be avoided. And if this is the reaction we have to what we see in the Middle East, then we have missed the whole point of Christ in us. Because when He saw the crowds, He did not see them with indignation because of their sin. He saw them with compassion because of their suffering. See the people of the Middle East, millions of them, wonderful people, precious people, created in the image of God and yes they have sin, but so do you. And He has created them for His glory and He has fashioned them with His own hands and He cares deeply for them and He feels their suffering.

Yes, we were five minutes away from this car bomb in East Beirut, but this is what they live in, in Beirut. Day after day, moment by moment, they never know. I preached about an hour or two after that bombing in a church to these people who some of them had been a 100 or 200 yards away from the bombing. And they know when they get up in the morning and they go throughout their city during the day, they know that they could be in the wrong place at the wrong time that particular day. They never know when it is going to happen. They said this is what we live in.

God help us to feel the suffering and to not just to see sin. God help us to see not like CNN sees, but see like Christ sees. Help us not to feel what FOX News feels. Help us to feel what Christ feels. A church moved with compassion deeply for the suffering of people in the world. They are harassed and helpless He said, sheep without a shepherd. In Christ we see their size, we feel their suffering, and in Christ we realize the separation of the multitudes.

They are described as sheep without a shepherd. Sheep wandering around with no one to lead them, no shepherd to lead them. One of the most poignant things that a person told us in the middle of one particular country, she said, "These people that you see, they have not rejected Christ, they have never even met Him." Sheep without a shepherd.

And it is at this point that Jesus transitions into a picture of the harvest. The harvest is plentiful. And what I had never seen in Matthew 9 that God opened my eyes to as I was studying this text was the picture of the harvest that is used here in Matthew 9 that is also used all across Scripture. And you look all across Scripture, we don't have time to go to some of these text, but Isaiah, you might want to write these down, but Isaiah 17:10-11 talks about the harvest at the time when God will bring His judgment upon sin. Joel 3:11-14 talks about the same exact thing. When the harvest comes, this will be the time when God judges sin. It is not a good picture in Isaiah or Joel. You turn over to Matthew 13:30 and then at the end of that chapter verse 40 through 42, what you will see is Jesus talked about the harvest and the time when the wheat will be separated from the tares. This is a time when it will be shown who are all those who are headed for eternal destruction. Then you go to Revelation 14:14-20 and you see the picture there and the harvest is the imagery that is used to describe when God will carry out everlasting judgment, eternal judgment on people who are apart from Christ because of their sin. That is the picture that we have got in the Bible of the harvest.

And so when Jesus uses this imagery for these Jewish Christians who are reading this to know... This is the picture. Why did Jesus have such compassion for those who are lost? Why was He urging them to get into the harvest field? He is urging them because God's judgment is sure. God judgment on sin is eternal. His judgment on sin is everlasting and if you don't get to the harvest now, then you will lose the harvest forever. If you don't take the gospel to these people today then many of them will experience God's judgment forever. That is why He had compassion. He saw their sighs and He felt their suffering and He realized their separation.

God help us to see the sighs of the multitudes, help us to feel the suffering of the multitudes, help us to realize the separation and as a result we must realize we can no longer live for ourselves. We can no longer live for ourselves. Not with that picture of need and the heart of Christ in us. There is no way to live Christianity for self-consumption anymore and it is Christianity for them, Christ in you for them. We are consumed by the love of Christ for them.

Three nights in a row we had an opportunity to sit down with three different groups of Muslims, two families and then one group of guys. We were there during Ramadan. It is Ramadan right now, which is the Muslim holy month where they fast all day from food or water. One particular country, you take a drink during the day and you can get arrested. So you just keep your water bottle in your bag the whole time.

And so we went three nights in a row to the meal called the Iftar. It literally means "breakfast". But is "break the fast". It is the meal that they break the fast for after the sun goes down and when they finish their final call to prayer. And we had the opportunity to be in a couple of different homes and one other place with these guys.

And they told us get to know their culture, learn from them. They will not ask you what you think or what you believe so don't volunteer that. And so that first night we sat there and listened and this family welcomed us into their homes. So hospitable. More hospitable than any picture I have ever seen in the United States. Just warmly welcoming us in and we sat around on the floor. Literally reclining at the table and eating and learning and they were sharing about their culture and their religion and all of these different things. We sat there for hours just learning and listening and having an incredible time with them.

The next night though we expected the same and we were sitting around and it was kind of going the same and these guys were sharing with us different things they believed in, but one of them said, "Well what do you guys believe?" Keep in mind this is a country where you are not allowed to share the gospel, and so you have got a quandary there. "Ok? How much do I want to share?" And we decided, "Well, why not?"

So we start to share and it was so interesting the dialogue. With Islam the divinity of Christ is a huge issue. They do not believe that Jesus is God. Jesus is a prophet, but God would not become a man. He would not debase Himself to do that and it would be fruitless to debate the divinity of Christ there at that table.

And so I began to describe how when I met Heather I began to pursue her with my love. And they were kind of listening, "This is your religion?" Just follow me. I began to pursue her with my love and I pursued her and I pursued her with my love but I couldn't send somebody else to tell her that I loved her. I didn't want to send my friends to tell her. I didn't want to send her friends to tell her. Even the most important person in the world I couldn't send them to tell her because in matters of love one must go himself. I said God is

infinite love and it matters of how He shows His love. He does not send someone else. Instead He comes Himself.

They start to listen and really that is interesting and they begin to talk about how they don't know for sure if they will spend eternity in heaven with God. I said let me take you back to my pursuit of love with my wife. I said, "What if I, let me give you two scenarios, what if I told my wife that I loved her as long as she cooked good food and made good meals and did things just like I wanted her to and as long as she did those things, I would love her, but if she did not do those things, then I would not love her and she could not longer be with me?" Or on the other hand what if I told my wife I loved her and no matter what happened and no matter what she did, I would always love her. She could always be with me. I said, "Which one would be the greater display of love?" They said, "Of course the second one. Unconditional love." I said, "Exactly. A Father who says, 'I love you regardless of what you do, I pour out my love in you.'" And this guy is sitting across the table and he is soaking it in and he looks back and he says, "So we love God because He loves us?" I mean the guy was quoting 1 John 4:19!

It is beautiful. And the next night we were with another family and we had not gotten into some of the specifics like specifically talk about how Christ is God. I gave them that word picture. We had not talked about how Christ had died on the cross. And this next night it was the last night in this particular country and they started asking us again what we believed and so it was all out this time. We just began to share about how God showed His love most clearly by giving His life for us.

And the response was, continually it was, God would not debase Himself like that. God is too great for that. I looked at them and said there is a quote that I like. It says, "Greater love has no one than this than He lay down is His life for His friends." Isn't that great love? They said, "Yeah, that is great love." This is God's great love.

And it was interesting in all those three conversations listening and talking to see them and to see the darkness just visibly in front of you and then to hear one of them. Listen to what he said. One of them said, "If we could hear the voices of those who are in hell crying out." He said—this is a Muslim man—he said, "We would not be able to stand it." The irony of that statement was thick and I prayed right there, "God, I pray that The Church at Brook Hills would hear Christ." And I prayed that we won't be able to stand it. That we see the size of the multitudes and feel their suffering, realize their separation and decide we will no longer live for ourselves. We will be consumed by the love of Christ in us for them. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

Your life is now committed to the body of Christ for them.

Now here is where it gets really interesting. In Christ your live is now consumed by the love of Christ for them, but second, your life is now committed to the body of Christ for them. To the body of Christ for the sake of those who are not in Christ. And I want you to see what happens. This is so interesting. The passage is focused on Christ's love for those who are lost, those who are apart from Him. But then when He begins to talk to His disciples, He doesn't talk about those who don't know Christ. He talks about the church. He said to His disciples, "*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field*" (Matt. 9:37-38).

Isn't that interesting? You would expect Him at this point to say, "They are harassed and helpless they are without the Father and so pray for them. Pray that they would come to know the Father. Pray for them." That is not what Jesus says. Jesus does not say to pray for

the lost. I am not saying that it is bad to pray for those who don't know Christ. I think there are other parts of the New Testament that do give us that picture, but not here. Jesus is not saying to pray for those who don't know Christ. He is not saying to pray for the lost. He is saying to pray for the church.

Isn't that interesting? Apparently Jesus' concern is not that the lost will not come to the Father; Jesus' concern is that the church will not go to the lost. Did you catch that? Jesus is not concerned that the lost will not come to the Father. His concern is that the church will not go to the lost. Wow what a picture. And to be completely honest this is probably the most disheartening part of the last two weeks for me. Even more disheartening than the vast spiritual lostness was the picture we saw of the church in the Middle East, precious brothers and sisters. It was such a disheartening picture.

Here is the deal. Basically in the Middle East to be a Christian quote unquote a Christian really has much more to do with your political or cultural status than it does with your religious status. Just because you are a Christian certainly does not mean that you are a follower of Christ. It means that you are not a Muslim or that it means that you vote a certain way. It means that you may go to or attend a church and that church may or may not believe the gospel.

We talked with some pastors, one pastor who had been a part of a church and he said I figured out that my pastor was not born again and so I started another church. So that is kind of the picture that is there. A Christian is really more political and cultural.

But we did have the opportunity to spend some time with some church leaders in a couple of different countries and to get a picture of the state of the church. And it is not a lot of evangelistic churches, churches that believe the gospel. But of those that are there, many of them, what we became aware of is that many of them are embroiled in struggles and a lot of those struggles deal with two things: money and power.

And the picture is the majority of the churches over there have either been started by or are currently supported by churches in the west, i.e., here or other places, western culture. And in one particular country, all of the churches, there was not one church that was started by a nationalist. All started by westerners and supported by westerners. And so what you have got is the church leaders who are there spend much of their time raising resources from the west to build buildings and to create programs in the church and they compete with each other for resources from the west to build buildings and to create programs.

And in that one particular country where there is not one church that has been started by a national one of those churches now is preparing to be a mega church in that country. They used the term. They want to build a big building. A mega church is a couple of hundred members there. They want to build a big building. They have a plan for a big building and they are going to get funds to build the building. The only problem is that for a Muslim to come into that church building in that culture could very well cost that Muslim his or her life. Because just as Christian is more of cultural or political, Muslim many times is the same way too, and so if you start going to church even once then you have dishonored your culture and your heritage and you can lose your life for that, legally. For a Muslim to get involved in one Christian program or to go to one church building could cost them their lives.

And so obviously that is not going to be the most effective way to reach Muslims with the gospel. Is it? I mean that is an easy one. That is a no brainer. And so it all begs the question, "Where did those church leaders get the idea that building buildings and having nice programs is the best way to spread the gospel?"

They have seen a model of ministry. We were in a few different churches and they all reflecting a strong western model of ministry. They have seen a model of ministry that says, "Spend your resources on nice buildings and great programs and you will have a successful church." That is what they have seen in us. That is what they are doing. In the meanwhile a Muslim world in the Middle East still sits by waiting to hear the gospel.

By the way we are doing church here, we are slowing down church there. We had one person literally tell us that. Having a conversation we said, "What can we do to help the church here?" His response immediately, "You are slowing us down by what you are doing and what you are failing to do." Those were his words. You don't want to hear that on the field in the middle of vast spiritual lostness.

And it is not other churches. We spend 80% of our budget on buildings and paid personnel. And together with churches throughout the southeastern United States, across the country, but they are everywhere here. Together we have shown to our brothers and sisters around the world that this is the wisest use of resources for the glory of God's kingdom, and we need to repent!

Because we know that all of our buildings and our paid personnel have fostered this come and see spectator mentality that is so prevalent across the church. And it is becoming prevalent there. And all of our nice, fancy programs... Lets be honest! And this is humbling. All of this is very humbling for a pastor to say. I don't say this lightly. But with all of our fancy programs, if we are really honest, we have to as Christians fight through the programs of the church to actually interact with lost people in our communities. And this is got to change for the sake of His glory in Birmingham and for the sake of His glory in Beirut, this has got to change.

How can we best penetrate the world with the gospel? It is through the church being the church. Personally making disciples, giving our lives for the sake of others, spreading and multiplying the gospel, that is what we must give ourselves to. It is high time for the church to rise up and do what the church was created to do for the sake of brothers and sisters here and on the other side of the world. We must be committed to the body of Christ for their sake for them. Jesus knew that the temptation would be there in His church to do everything except for the one thing He told them to do. And that is where we are. He was concerned that the church would not go to the lost. And so let's start spending our time and our resources and everything we have on giving our lives to this mission and let's repent of the comfortable, extremely comfortable, yet radically un-Biblical model of ministry that we have adopted and exported around the world.

Your life is committed to the body of Christ for them. So what do we do? What do we do? Jesus says pray, pray, we must pray for laborers, pray for harvesters to go, pray for laborers, ask the Lord of the harvest. Again He is not saying pray for the lost. He is saying pray for the church. Pray that the Lord of the harvest would wake up the harvesters. In church buildings across this land, pray that God would wake up harvesters to see that there are things in the world that are infinitely more important than 401k's and football—God help us.

We are so blinded to the true battle in the world by the artificial battles that surround us in our culture. And we have the gall to talk about how someone can be a coach and a savior in Alabama when we fill our conversations even on Sunday morning with that! Let's start talking about how the Savior of the world is penetrating the nations with His greatness. Let's let that consume our conversations. Let's let that drive our days and nights. Let's spend hours on the Internet finding how we can pray for our brothers and sisters around

the world. Let's do that. And I am convinced when we pray like this that we will see a great harvest in Birmingham and the Middle East. We pray like this. Pray for laborers and we must lead by example.

We must lead by example. God has given us so much. He has given us so many resources, so much opportunity, so much influence and we will be held accountable before the God of the universe for how we use those resources to expand His kingdom around the world. We need to lead by example.

Your life is now commissioned in the work of Christ for them.

That leads us to this last picture. Your life is consumed by the life of Christ and committed to the body of Christ for them. Your life is now commissioned in the work of Christ for them. Commissioned. I love this. Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore to send out workers. That phrase 'send out' is the same phrase that is used when Jesus cast out demons in other parts of the New Testament. Cast out literally means to "fling out". I love that. Ask God to start flinging His church all over the world. Just fling the church. We are a church flung. I don't know if that is a word, but that is what we are praying God would do. Fling the church out.

And that is what He does in Matthew 10:1. We read it. He called His twelve disciples to Him. That is another great word that really doesn't get the meaning there with just this word "called". It literally means He summoned them as to call them to a face-to-face encounter. I love it. Jesus brings His disciples face to face, kind of gets in their face, and says, "Alright guys, it is time for you to go. It is time for you to go. I am going to cast you out. It is time for you to be flung. You are going to go out and you are going to do this, commissioned for the work of Christ."

And then you notice the change, verse 1 says He called His twelve what? Disciples to Him. Verse 2 these are the names of the twelve what? Apostles. Oh, that is great. Disciple literally means a learner following a teacher. Apostle means someone who is sent out by the teacher. This is a picture Jesus calls disciples to send them out. And yes there is something special all across the New Testament about these guys. Them as an apostle and Paul as an apostle, but the picture we also get in the New Testament is that we are all sent out.

And the picture is here, wow it is a great word picture, it is literally being sent out basically as an agent or emissary of someone else. Kings would send out agents or ambassadors that would literally represent them. And if somebody went as an agent or an ambassador of the king, it was like the king going himself. The king literally went through him and so when this agent or ambassador comes, it is like the king has come to you. The king has a message for you. Isn't that a great picture what Jesus does? He calls us to Himself and He sends us out and everywhere we go we are agents, ambassadors of the king.

And He gives them authority. He doesn't send them out alone, authority to drive out spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. He gives them that authority and the good thing is it is not just for them. Matthew 28:18, right before the Great Commission, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me; therefore, you go and make disciples." Same picture that is there. We have the authority of the King. We go as agents of the King, as ambassadors of the King, and His authority to drive out evil spirits, to drive out darkness.

That was one of my favorite parts sitting in there in those rooms sharing about Christ and to know the truth that Christ has power to cause all that darkness to flee. All of it. And there were kids sitting around in the room listening. I looked at their faces and to know that this is first time that each of them was hearing the gospel and to pray for them and to know that this is the first time that their face has ever been lifted up to the throne.

To know that the words of the gospel that coming out of my mouth, that those words have power to penetrate hearts to change them. We have the authority of the King.

And we live and we die to multiply the kingdom. This is the great picture in verse 2 it gives us a list of these guys. It tells them they were sent out in groups. We see a picture of two by two in the Gospels. And we have talked about this. We saw this a few weeks ago that these guys were grouped even in smaller groups out of these twelve. And they knew that if they were going to expand this message of the kingdom, they couldn't all stay together in one group, they had to multiply. And so they multiplied through small groups. That is what they did. Because they knew the masses needed to know and they didn't want to consolidate everything together, they wanted to spread it out, scatter it out.

Do you realize what day and age God has put us in, in the history of the world? There are more people on earth today than there has ever been in the history of the world. Why did God not save Paul for 2007? Because He put you in 2007 and me in 2007.

In Christ's day, they estimate, statisticians estimate about 250 million people, slightly less than the United States. It took 1800 years, until about 1850 for there to be 1 billion people. And then things just started to grow. Within 80 years there were 2 billion, 30 years, 3 billion, 15 years 4 billion, 10 years 5 billion, until today where there is close to 7 billion people, 6 ½ to 7 billion people.

If that is the case then we have to consider any strategy in the church that is incremental insufficient. No matter how great the program is, if it is incremental, then it will never keep up with the exploding population of the world. We must give our self to that which is reproducible across cultures around the world, multiplying the gospel. That is why we are giving ourselves to disciple making. We live and die to multiple the kingdom. Because verse 21 through 28 Jesus talks to them about how all men will hate them because of Him. And He says don't fear the ones who can kill the body. "You will be persecuted", He says, "Just as I have been, you will be."

The picture is heavy and that our brothers and sisters do know in the Middle East. Sitting in a home with a pastor who last year had his home bombed in the Lebanon-Israeli conflict. To talk with these men and women who live in this picture in Beirut day in and day out. To talk with one person who had come from Islam to faith in Christ, to know that if certain people found out, she would immediately be killed, legally be killed. And to begin to think, I pray that God will never let us in the church be dissuaded from this mission by the risk it may bring. Because if we are dissuaded by the risk it may bring, then we have to ask ourselves the question, what kind of Christ are we really following? Give everything to multiple the kingdom.

There is a book called *The Purpose Driven Church* by Rick Warren, who's the pastor of Saddle Back. I want to use this as an illustration, and I want to just give this caveat from the very beginning. This is not in any way a criticism of him or that church. I've been out to that church. They are doing incredible things to lead people to Christ, and they are doing even more around the world. It is great. So this is just by way of comparison. So just keep that in mind.

But this was a big church growth book, and in the book it talked about "Saddleback Sam". And what it is, they identified the profile of the people who lived in their community, and they said, "We're going to do what we do—do church—for the sake of this young urban professional with this kind of family, and this kind of beliefs. We're going to gear things around this person. So this was kind of the profile—"Saddleback Sam." And they

encouraged churches, "If you want to grow and reach people who don't know Christ, then get a profile of the people in your community and go after them."

And so I want us to do that. We're going to do it a little different. We're not going to live for "Brook Hills Bob", or "Brook Hills Betty." Ok? That's not our profile. We're going to work for the "Brook Hills Bedouin." Let me give you the profile.

The profile is 5 million Bedouin people scattered throughout countries in the Middle East who live in relatively harsh conditions. Tents made of goat hair in the middle of desert regions, have little food and oftentimes live in poor health conditions. Men, women, and children, 5 million of them. And among the Bedouin people there are 40 believers—40 people who know Christ out of 5 million. That is .0008%. For a Bedouin to come to faith in Christ, they can legally lose their lives. That is the profile we, The Church at Brook Hills, are going to live for. And we are going to do everything we do as a church here for their sake over there.

And what that means is we won't do a lot of things that the people might expect us to do and we might expect us to do as a church. This is what a church does. We have grown up in church and the church does this and this and this and this. And a lot of those things are effective if our audience is a 10 mile radius around this location. But our audience is no longer this 10 mile radius. Our audience is people who live 10,000 miles away from here and have never heard the name of Jesus. And so we are going to give ourselves to small groups that are making disciples of all nations because if we are doing that, we are giving ourselves to that, we will impact the Bedouin people with the gospel. We will take the gospel to them.

So we are going to go on a journey with the church to begin to uncover what it is like to do church for the sake of people who have never heard the name of Jesus on the other side of the world. And I am trusting in the process we are going to begin to realize the heart of Christ and we are going to begin to be consumed by His love for them and committed to His body for them and commissioned in His work for their sake.

What I want us to do in response to this word is exactly what Jesus told us to do. I want us to pray. I want us to pray. And unusually I don't want us to pray for the Bedouin or those who don't know Christ. I want us to do what Jesus said, and I want us to pray for the church. I want us to spend time out of this Word praying for each other that God would help us all including myself. Help us all to put on the altar all of our agendas and all of the things that we expect when we think of church, to put it all on the altar and come back to the Bible and say how do we do the ministry Biblically for their sake. I want us to pray for each other. I want us to pray for this church.

And I want us to pray for our brothers and sisters around the world whom we have affected. I want us to pray that God would give us great partnership with them in the gospel to make disciples together. I want to invite you to pray for the brothers and sisters in Lebanon, in Syria, in Jordan, in Saudi Arabia, in Egypt, in Algeria, in Iraq, in Iran and Pakistan. I want to invite you to pray for brothers and sisters all across the world and know that we have the opportunity right now to be a part of affecting the harvest through our prayers. I just going to invite you to be a people who fall before God and say, "We want you to wake up your Church here and around the world so that we impact this harvest with the gospel."

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