



God Has A Mission and He's Looking For A Church

Luke 24:44-49, Matthew 28:19-20

I. INTRO

- A. This presidential election season has been eye opening for me (you?).
1. Here's how one writer summed it up: "What should we do when faced with two candidates who fall so radically short of basic decency, honesty, and integrity?"¹
 2. We need, I think, to ask, "How did we get here?" It certainly seems like God is holding a mirror up to America and showing us who we really are as a nation.²
 3. Whichever presidential candidate you vote for – we'll have five on the ballot here in CA – or, a write-in; I think one thing is abundantly clear: The United States of America and the rest of the world is in dire need of a God-breathed revival.
- B. Today, I want to examine with you what God's word has to say about how we are to position ourselves for a God-breathed revival.
- C. For most of us in the room it will be a reframing of principles and promises that we already know.
- D. Here's a quote from a favorite theologian of mine who died back in 1982: "God alone, who has told us that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations, will know when that objective has been accomplished. But I do not need to know. I know only one thing: Christ has not yet returned; therefore, the task is not yet done. When it is done, Christ will come. Our responsibility is not to insist on defining the terms of our task; our responsibility is to complete it. So long as Christ does not return, our work is not done. Let us get busy and complete our mission! —George Ladd³

¹ <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-gift-of-god-s-judgment> (Joe Rigney)

² *Ibid.*

³ From a sermon, "A Motive for Mission" by U.S. author, professor, and theologian (1911-1982).

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- E. Today I would like to talk to you about the fact that “God Has A Mission and He’s Looking for a Church.”
- F. As we begin, I would like for you to see a **video** that was filmed and edited by our own extremely gifted people here at KHC and is on the website that announces our search for a permanent pastor...
- G. KHC Mission Statement...
1. Tweetable version: Love God, Love People, Make Disciples
 2. Long form: We exist to bring glory to God by loving God supremely, loving people unconditionally, and making passionate disciples of Jesus in the South Bay and beyond.
- H. Let’s look at Luke 24:44-49 and Matthew 28:19-20 (then pray):
1. *“Now [Jesus] said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’”* Luke 24:44-49
 2. *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* --Matthew 28:19-20
- I. What does it say? “Go Therefore...” or, the KJV says, “Go Ye...”
1. Today, I’d like to ask the question: “What does it mean to GO?”
 2. There’s a phrase that’s being used to describe a “Go therefore” church: Missional Church -- A missional church is a church that is focused on joining the mission of Jesus (which we just read).

II. BODY

- A. In our time together this morning there are 3 things I’d like to accomplish...

1. **Provide you with a brief historical overview of what it means to be on mission with Jesus – with implications for our current cultural dilemma.**
2. **Provide you with a reminder of what it means for KHC to be on mission with Jesus.**
3. **Provide you with a perspective of what it takes to shift into a missional model – and what it means to join the mission of Jesus.**

B. We'll look at them one at a time:

1. **Historical overview...**

- a. We are living in a seam, or hinge, of history...there is great change happening on almost every front around the world – including the global Church.
- b. An overview:
 - 1) When Christianity began in approximately 33 A.D., it was a subversive, counter-cultural movement that existed at the margins of society – not in the center. People tended to be either all the way in – or, all the way out because martyrdom was always a very real possibility.
 - 2) The goal of the early Christians was NOT comfort or safety. The goal was to exegete, or interpret, the culture around them and proclaim the gospel in that context – they were contextualizing the gospel for the culture, or sub-culture, they were attempting to reach. (Acts 17 is a brilliant example of this – Paul, in his sermon at Mars Hill, addressed their cultural longings and then reinterpreted those longings by showing them how the gospel could meet their greatest needs. It was masterful.)
 - 3) There was about 300 years of this – and the number of Christ-followers began to grow.
 - a) Conservative estimates are that of a population of 50 million, at least 10%, or 5 million people were Christians.
 - b) Maximian, the Roman Emperor who preceded Constantine, said in one of his edicts, that "almost all"

had abandoned the worship of their ancestors for [Christianity].⁴

- 4) When Emperor Constantine made Christianity a legal state religion in 313 Christianity began its move from the margins of society to the center of society -- exerting increasing influence and power for the last 1,700 years.
 - 5) This move from the margins is reflected in what sociologist Peter Berger describes as "life under the sacred canopy," when the Cathedral dominated the city, and the church spire was at the center of almost every town.
- c. What we need to see looking back is that there were great advantages AND great disadvantages to this westernized view of Christianity, that came to be known as "Christendom."
- 1) The advantage: The Bible became the common perspective and language for public discourse from which society could discuss what was "good" or "moral," or "right."
 - 2) The disadvantage: Mandated Christian morality without gospel-changed hearts often led to cruelty, hypocrisy, and the abuse of power and authority.
 - 3) There is a story of Thomas Aquinas when he visited Pope Innocent II and found him counting a large sum of money. "Ah, Thomas," said the Pope, "the church can no longer say, '*silver and gold have I none.*'" That is true, Your Holiness," said Aquinas, "but neither can we now say, '*Arise and walk*'" (Acts 3:6).
 - 4) And the Church slowly began to lose its moral high ground...
- d. The decline of Christendom has accelerated greatly since the end of WW-2. Ravaged by two world wars scores of people, most of whom had lost loved ones in the war began to leave the Church. (Which has also played a role in the upswing of the postmodern worldview...)

⁴ Philip Schaff. *History of the Christian Church Vol. II*, Section 4:21. For additional study see *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* by Rodney Stark.

- e. It is for these and other reasons, that the church in Europe and North America has been losing its privileged place in the center of society and as the authority of public morality.
 - 1) Europe has entered a “post-Christian” era with less than 5% of all the people in the urban centers attending any church at all.
 - 2) And North America is following close behind...both coasts are extremely secular.
- f. Once again the church is finding itself at the margins of culture and society – we have lost our place of moral authority.
 - 1) This will force us, as the Church, to engage the increasingly post-Christian culture around us in a whole new way...as missionaries.
 - 2) Studies indicate that unchurched people in our current cultural milieu do not have a problem with God, or Jesus -- they have a problem with the Church.
- g. Our current context in North America is more like the NT context – the church has been pushed to the margins of society and is no longer at the center of society.
 - 1) God has a mission – and He is looking for a church.
 - 2) Mission is not just an activity carried out by special people in faraway places – mission is the character of the Church in whatever context it exists.

2. A reminder of what it means to be missional

- a. KHC has been a missional church almost since the day-one of our replanting in 1997.
- b. Let’s quickly consider two models, or styles, of church: The Attractional Model and the Missional Model...
 - 1) Attractional model: A church-wide focus on getting people to “come” to us. Once the services have a sufficient “excellence quotient” people will bring their friends to church and trust the pastor to “close the deal.”
 - 2) Missional model: A church-wide focus of adapting and reformulating worship, discipleship, community, and service --

so as to be engaged with the post-Christian culture that surrounds us.

3) At KHC we want to be both...

- c. A missional church seeks to let God's passion for mission permeate everything the congregation does. A missional church is a church that has allowed itself to be shaped by participation in God's mission.
- d. Here's one definition of a missional church: The *mission* of the church is to discern, celebrate, and participate in God's redemptive mission in the world; developing missionary sensitivities, vision, and practices for engaging the surrounding culture (and subcultures) with the gospel.
- e. This missional reorientation – or shift -- represents a profound learning curve for most churches and a strategic challenge for most church leaders.
- f. Missional churches see themselves not so much as sending churches, but as churches being sent.
- g. Missional churches are characterized by a great deal of respect for those who don't believe – we take the time and effort to connect the gospel to base-line cultural narratives, hopes, problems, aspirations – we inhabit the same world.
- h. "Most traditional mission sending agencies in North America and Europe have, in general, failed to recognize that the most urgent contemporary mission field is to be found in their own traditional heartlands, and that the most aggressive paganism with which they have to engage is the ideology that now controls the 'developed' world." --Leslie Newbigin⁵

3. Shifting into a missional model...

- a. There is a theological shift to a focus on gospel centrality that gives way to...

⁵ Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Revised). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 1995:10.

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- b. A shift from an *ecclesiocentric* (church centered) understanding of mission to a *theocentric* (God centered) reconceptualization of Christian mission.⁶
- c. In other words, it's not about (us) the church; it's about God and the gospel. The church, then, would become the fruit of missional activity.
- d. Sometimes we make the fruit, the goal. The goal is not to try and get people to come here – the goal is to go and take the kingdom of God into the community. The fruit of that missional activity is that more and more people will want to come here.
- e. Missional Christianity is God expressing His love to all outsiders through authentic relationships as well as acts of kindness and service. Mission in this sense includes missions, and more. It brings together social engagement, civil dialogue, and evangelism.
- f. A shift in perspective – a move from a church-centric view to an apostolic view (apostle means “sent one”). Here are some characteristics of the apostolic view...
 - 1) Apostolic churches order their lives around a missionary purpose.
 - 2) Apostolic churches believe they are responsible for fulfilling the great commission.
 - 3) Apostolic churches are entrepreneurial and take calculated risks to create new possibilities for living out the gospel.
 - 4) Apostolic churches prefer to work in teams – they are team players – not Lone Rangers.
 - 5) Apostolic churches tend to have fairly flat organizational charts – they practice ad-hocracy instead of establishing too much bureaucracy (i.e., simple church and policy governance).
 - 6) Apostolic churches are raw and real.

⁶ Guder, Darrell L., and Lois Barrett. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998: 4.

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- 7) Apostolic churches seek to be students of culture and meet people where they are – without watering down the gospel message.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. The N American church is at a crossroads...The Bible, in Luke 24 and Matthew 28, indicate that the Church is to be gospel centered and mission driven.
- B. The mission statement of KHC is an overview of both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.
 - a. Great Commandment: *“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.” And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”* --Luke 10:27 (see also Matthew 22 and Mark 12)
 - b. Great Commission: *“Go and make disciples...”* --Matthew 28:19 (see also Luke 24, Mark 16, John 20)
- C. Restate the gospel.
 - a. The Great Commandment and the Great Commission are both imperatives, or commands. We must ask what is the indicative? In other words what is the underlying truth that drives the commands?
 - b. *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* --Romans 5:8
 - c. The gospel is central because it is not what God requires it is what God provides. The gospel is not an imperative, demanding things we must do. The gospel is an indicative, declaring what God has done. The gospel is not about human activity; it's about divine achievement. The gospel is not a moralistic “Do!” The gospel is a merciful “Done!” The gospel is not good advice – it's good news! We want the gospel of Christ to inform and empower all that we do to the glory of God.

P.A.S.S. Questions For KHC Group Leaders

Sermon Dates: 10/22-23, 2016

Sermon Title: God Has A Mission and He's Looking For A Church

Sermon Passage: Luke 24:44-49, Matthew 28:19-20

Group Leaders: Don't feel like you need to get through all the questions. Pick one participation question and 2-3 others. Also, feel free to adapt or ask your own questions. The main objective is to underscore the main points of the sermon in an interactive/dialogical way – and certainly leave room for prayer.

P - Participation (get everyone involved in the dialog)

1. Tell us about the time that you discovered a fabulous new restaurant, or read a great book, or vacationed at an amazing spot, or ?? Who did you tell about your "find" – and what made you so excited to tell people?

A - Application (makes it personal)

2. About how many people do you consistently interact with on a weekly basis? How many of them are not active followers of Christ?
3. What are some ways you could encourage and serve some of the people in your life who are not Christians?

S - Scripture (thinking biblically is a learned behavior! :-)

4. When Jesus says in Matthew 28:19, "*Go therefore...*" do you believe He is speaking to you?
5. Has everyone in your group been baptized? (If not talk about the meaning and implications...)
6. What are the basic attributes and skills of a mature follower of Jesus?

S – Sharing (aim for a time of honest reflection, authenticity, and transparency in a safe atmosphere modeled by you). [Choose one of the following as a final dialogue question.]

7. Have each person in the group share an attribute or skill that they would like to grow in. Pray for one another.