

“THE CHURCH ON PURPOSE”

“On Purpose In Evangelism”

Scripture Reading – I John, 1:1-7

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

‘With many other words Peter warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation”. Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.’

Acts, 2:40-41, NIV

THE CHURCH ON PURPOSE is the theme for this series.






Sometimes, when we do something accidentally and it turns out okay, we say, “I did that on purpose”. However, when it turns out not so good we admit the truth: “It was an accident and I did not mean to do it”. When it comes to obeying God’s Word and doing his will, I hope we always act “ON PURPOSE”.

THE CHURCH ON PURPOSE is based on the example of the Early Christian Church.

‘With many other words Peter warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation”. Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.’

In Acts, 2:40-47, we read of five purposes God desires for his Church:

 <u>EVANGELISM</u>	(Acts, 2:40-41)
 <u>DISCIPLESHIP</u>	(Acts, 2:42)
 <u>FELLOWSHIP</u>	(Acts, 2:42, 44, 46)
 <u>MINISTRY</u>	(Acts, 2:45)
 <u>WORSHIP</u>	(Acts, 2:42, 46-47)

In the series, we will concentrate on this amazing summary of the Early Church.

When they actively engaged in EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP, MINISTRY, and WORSHIP, what was the result? **‘THE LORD ADDED TO THEIR NUMBER DAILY THOSE WHO WERE BEING SAVED’.**

If we do as they did, can the Lord add to our number **‘THOSE WHO ARE BEING SAVED’?**

*Those first disciples of the Lord, received the promise of his word,
And in their lives such power did dwell, to speed the message they should tell,
To all mankind, that Jesus lives, and grace to each believer gives;
May that same grace inspire today, to live for Christ, the life and way.*

John Hunt, SASB 760:1

“ON PURPOSE IN EVANGELISM”

‘There is a story told about a man who was accused of some wrongdoing and was brought before a judge. When the judge asked if he had a lawyer to represent him, the man answered, “No, I cannot afford one”. The judge replied, “Well, do not worry about that, I will appoint one to represent you, and I will choose a really good one”. The man answered, “I appreciate that, Judge, but if you really want to appoint someone to help me, what I need most is not a really good lawyer, but several good and reliable witnesses”.’

God does not need a couple of good lawyers trying to prove his existence, or the truth of creation, or defending his ways to a lost humanity.

But, what the Lord does require is this: a number of good witnesses that are willing to tell others what the Almighty has done for them, believing that he can do it for others today.

‘We who proclaim the Gospel must not think of ourselves as public relations agents sent to establish goodwill between Christ and the world. We must not imagine ourselves commissioned to make Christ acceptable to big business, the press, the world of sports or modern education. We are not diplomats but prophets, and our message is not a compromise but an ultimatum.’

A W Tozer

A good witness is one who knows something first-hand through their own experience, and who can bring that truth to the attention of others. It involves both an experience and a testimony.

EVANGELISM

Dictionary: “preaching or spreading the Gospel”.

WHY DOES THE CHURCH EXIST?

Win Arn surveyed members of over 1,000 churches asking them this question.

89% replied, *"The Church's purpose is to take care of my, and my family's, needs".*

11% replied, *"The Church's purpose is to win the world for Jesus Christ".*

Is this attitude symptomatic of why the Church is generally declining in our land?

We have become focussed too much on ourselves and neglected to do the things of God.

The manifesto of Jesus included "PREACHING GOOD NEWS", and he was soon doing it.

'Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come", he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news".'

Mark, 1:14-15, NIV

The Early Christian Church viewed EVANGELISM as a great responsibility.

'The apostles Barnabas and Paul tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them".'

Acts, 14:14-15, NIV

"All the members of the Church should be active in ON PURPOSE EVANGELISM"

1. Evangelism happens when we SEE ON PURPOSE

The disciples had an advantage. For three years they were with Jesus.

They had seen many things... his miracles, his death, his resurrection, his ascension.

They had heard many things... his parables about the Kingdom, his teaching.

You must actually experience something before you can become a witness.

When the disciples chose Matthias to replace Judas, they had one major concern...

'Peter said, "Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection".'

Acts, 1:21-22, NIV

You must actually know something before you can become a witness.

In a Court of Law, hearsay is not acceptable evidence. You cannot give testimony of something witnessed by another. You must be certain and sure of what you yourself have experienced.

'We are a salvation people – this is our speciality – getting saved and keeping saved, and then getting somebody else saved, and then getting saved ourselves more and more, until full salvation on earth makes the heaven within, which is perfected by the full salvation without, on the other side of the river. We believe in salvation. We believe in old-fashioned salvation. Ours is the same salvation taught in the Bible, proclaimed by the

prophets and apostles. We believe the world needs it, and that this alone will set it right. We need no other nostrum – nothing new.

'There are think-so Christians, and there are hope-so Christians; thank God we belong to the know-so people – we know we are saved.

'Our work is salvation. We believe in salvation, and we have salvation. We are not mere sentimentalists or theory people; we tell what we have heard and seen and handled and experienced of the word of life and the power of God. We aim at salvation. We want this and nothing short of this, and we want this right off. My brothers, my comrades, soul saving is our avocation, the great purpose and business of our lives. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God, let us be Salvationists indeed.'

William Booth

Only as I truly know thee, can I make thee truly known;

Only bring the power to others, which in my own life is shown.

Show thy power in me, show thy power in me,

That I may be used for others; show thy power in me.

Ruth Tracy, SASB 435:3

"Watch what you know, for with your experience, you can do ON PURPOSE EVANGELISM"

2. Evangelism happens when we SPEAK ON PURPOSE



The word EVANGELISE comes from the Greek word EUGGELIZO which means: 'TO ANNOUNCE GOOD NEWS; TO DECLARE GLAD TIDINGS'.

If we are to announce and declare, then we must surely speak of what we know.

The words we say are powerfully important, for with them we can bring someone into a knowledge of Jesus Christ or with them drive someone further away from the Kingdom of God.

Consider Paul's experience.

'You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition. For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts... And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.'

1 Thessalonians, 2:1-4, 13, NIV

'The words we choose and the way we use them communicate more about us and our faith than we can possibly imagine.'

James W Moore

All our words... how they are spoken... when they are spoken... why they are spoken... ought to reflect that born-again relationship we have with God and through Jesus Christ.

The words we choose to speak concerning the Gospel must reflect the reality that our life was once lost and headed to hell, but only through the intervention of God's grace in Jesus Christ has our life been redeemed, reconciled, restored and renewed to the Living God. That is the good news of evangelism... Jesus can save sinful mankind, because he has saved you!

William MacDonald warns that the modern day evangelism process is cut down to a few basic questions and answers of belief that de-emphasises repentance (the conviction of sin), the Lordship of Christ, and the true meaning and full implications of Christian discipleship.

'Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.'

Ephesians, 4:29, NIV

"Watch what you say, for with your words, you can do ON PURPOSE EVANGELISM"

3. Evangelism happens when we CARE ON PURPOSE

"People do not care how much we know until they know how much we care."





Consider how Paul cared for the Christians in Thessalonica.

'You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed – God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.'

'You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.'

I Thessalonians, 2:5-12, NIV

Paul states that the Christian Missionaries cared in many ways:

-  *They were caring... as a nursing mother.*
-  *They were affectionate... to give not only the Gospel, but also their own lives.*
-  *They were devoted... acting with justice and blamelessness among them.*
-  *They were father like... encouraging, comforting and urging.*

'Can you recommend your faith in Jesus Christ by the way you treat others?'

James W Moore

Our lives should reflect the care and compassion of THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

'Jesus said, "A Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him', he said, and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have'".'

Luke, 10:33-35, NIV

"Watch how you care, for with your caring, you can do ON PURPOSE EVANGELISM"

4. Evangelism happens when we SERVE ON PURPOSE

Throughout Scripture, we are instructed how to serve God.

'I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.'

Romans, 16:17-18, NIV

'You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.'

Galatians, 5:13, NIV

We are to serve and share Jesus Christ with the world.

Everything that we are engaged in as a Church should be designed for that purpose.

Because Paul spoke and cared, the Thessalonians turned from idols to serve God.

'The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia – your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.'

I Thessalonians, 1:8-9, NIV

"Watch how you serve, for with your service, you can do ON PURPOSE EVANGELISM"

The motive of evangelism is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with a lost world.

We ought to be motivated to evangelise through our words, our caring and our service.

'The monument I want after I am dead and gone is a monument with two legs going about the world. A saved sinner telling about the salvation of Jesus Christ.'

Dwight L Moody

What does God need? A couple of good witnesses!

To this purpose, let us live so we might be able to say, "Evangelism? We did that On Purpose!"