

It Matters
“Why Mission Matters”
Part 1

Intro: What really matters to you? Have you ever thought about that? Whether or not we have ever articulated it, we all have things that really matter to us. They are life’s priorities – Life’s essentials – the things that make life worth living. These are the non-negotiables of your existence.

For the next 6 weeks we are going to explore what really matters. We’re going to look at God’s word and discover what essentials we should be building our lives with. We’re also going to be looking at how we create a life that is guided and blessed by things that really matter.

I see a culture and especially the younger generations struggling with meaning and purpose. There is this hopelessness that what they do simply doesn’t matter. That they don’t matter. I am here to tell you that you do matter. You matter to God. You matter in His Kingdom. You matter for His purposes. You were made for more. You may be thinking; “What?”

Today we begin by talking about mission. As followers of Jesus, we have not been gloriously forgiven for the sole purpose of going to heaven someday. You and I have a relationship with Jesus so we can partner with Him in the mission He gave us while we live on this earth. Far too many believers see this as an optional activity. It’s not...Mission matters!
WHY?

1. Mission Matters Because Jesus Gave It

Matt 28:18-20 “Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (NLT)

- Jesus entrusted the mission to the church
- The church is in the business of making disciples. A disciple is simply a follower of Jesus. Jesus didn’t tell us to go and make believers, He told the church to make disciples...to make followers...to lead people into obedience. He said; “Go and make.”
- We have become so individualistic when it comes to our faith. It’s all about Jesus and me. What Jesus can do for me? How Jesus helps me through life. The mission is often forgotten. OR we think the mission is all about us! We think we are the mission. In fact, most Christians chase after the American Dream instead of the mission Jesus gave them. We have forgotten that Jesus entrusted something to us...Mission!
- Jesus entrusted transformation to the church

Matt. 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.”¹⁴ “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.”¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” (NLT) Go influence this world!

- Jesus said that His church is the salt and light of the entire world! What an amazing statement. We need to understand the metaphors Jesus is using here.
 - **Salt** was THE preservative in ancient times. Without salt, food spoils quickly. If we are salt in our culture, this means the culture will spoil without our influence. Because the church has pulled away from culture in the past 50 years, we have the results from a lack of preservation. Society is spoiling.
 - **Light** allows people to see their way in the darkness. Without light, our culture simply stumbles and falls not being able to navigate. Without light people get lost without direction. Once again, we see how lost our culture really is. (explain)
 - Salt and light transform whatever it is exposed to. The mission Jesus entrusted too us is one that transforms. It is transformational. This is why we use this word. This is why we have it on our wall. It’s our mission!

- Jesus also warned the church not to lose influence

“It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless”

When churches no longer prioritize the mission Jesus entrusted to them, they become worthless in bringing about Kingdom transformation in our world. When churches are no longer salty...when they no longer shine as light in darkness, they lose their influence. We can’t ever lose our transformational saltiness. To not embrace and follow the mission Jesus gave us is to make His church meaningless.

- If we neglect the mission and reject our influence, the church will be “trampled underfoot” by culture. We end up with a Christianity Paul describes as “a form of godliness without the power.” It has the trappings – the appearance of faith, but no influence...no real power. What Jesus gave His church has the power to transform a world. This is what He entrusted to each and every one of His followers.

2. Mission Matters Because The World Needs It

I John 5:19 “We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one.” (NLT)

Acts 26:17-18 “...Yes, I am sending you to the Gentiles¹⁸ to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God’s people, who are set apart by faith in me.” (NLT)

- There is a spiritual battle for control raging around us

“...the world around us is under the control of the evil one.” (NLT)

Do you really believe this? If we do, how can any believer stand by and do nothing! How can anyone simply grab their piece of the spiritual pie and not care that others are trapped in darkness?

- Just look at what is taking place in our world. I know it's discouraging, but the physical things we see are simply evidence of the spiritual battle that is raging.
- The battles we see are spiritual / The battle with poverty is spiritual – 1 billion people live in one dollar a day / The battle for values – marriages – gender identity - the divisive spirit – the hatred – is spiritual. The political animosity is spiritual. The wars – Iran – Israel – Russia – Ukraine - all evidence of the spiritual conflict.
- As believers we need to get our spiritual lenses on and see the world accurately.

- The only lasting solution in this world is spiritual

“...so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness...” (NLT)

The solution in our world is not political. It is not social. We will never be able to plan or program or vote our way into transformation. The core issue is spiritual. The core problem is spiritual. Jesus has called you and I to address it in our world. How can people turn from darkness to light without God's people embracing this mission?

- Mankind's biggest problem will always be that we are separated from the God who loves us. It is only through Jesus that our sinful hearts can be transformed. It's only through Jesus that we can experience forgiveness. The root of the problem has to be changed. Listen to how God describes the root issue.

Jer. 17:9 “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?” (NLT) Only God knows how bad it is that's why He sent His Son!

- Article of Stephen Hawkins – Man's propensity for aggression will destroy the world not Global warming or other factors. (Read quote)
- The mission matters because without it, this world has NO hope!

3. Mission Matters Because We're Called to It

Eph. 4:1 “Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.” (NLT)

- Following the mission ensures we live our calling

You may not realize this, but God has a calling on your life. We have been entrusted with a global mission. Every believer in Jesus is commanded to live out this calling. This is not a command simply for Pastors and Missionaries. It is a calling for each follower of Jesus and it's a calling for each church

- Following our calling matters. WHY? Because it's an obedience issue. Jesus entrusted us with something. Here is the most important thing on God's heart...the reconciling of people back to Him. He gave us this calling.
- Our calling is simply to represent. We are Ambassadors for Jesus in this life. We are witnesses of His work in our lives. He's not asking you to be a Pastor. Your calling is to simply be ready to represent Jesus in this world when opportunity presents itself. Don't forget who you represent.
- Sometimes you tell parts of your story. Sometimes you have opportunity to share a different perspective on life. Sometimes people simply observe how you treat others differently. Often, they observe how you handle stress – disappointment and pain. Sometimes it's talking about a church event (conversations in the gym about Father's Day).
- Following the mission protects us from alternatives
When churches or believers abandon their calling / their mission they follow other things. They will find substitutes for the genuine and pure calling of God that changes our world. Like what?
 - People follow man-made rules instead of Jesus

Heb. 13:9 "So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas. Your strength comes from God's grace..." (NLT)

Col. 2:8 "Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ." (NLT)

When we're following Jesus and embracing the mission we don't have time to get distracted with man-made rules. BUT, when we stop following the mission, we create our own version of Christianity. We try to regulate spirituality with rules. Following rules VS Jesus. This is the heart of legalism.

- It's much easier to follow rules than Jesus. When you follow rules, you never have to develop spiritual discernment. You never have to listen to the Holy Spirit. Legalism literally replaces Jesus.
- It might not be legalism – it could be non-essential issues. Like what? Take prophecy for example. Christians get obsessed with it. They argue over it. They divide over it. They care more about predicting the future than loving the people who are right in front of them now.

- People follow human personalities instead of Jesus

I Cor. 3:21 "So don't boast about following a particular human leader..." (NLT)

We all learn from different spiritual leaders, but we follow Jesus. If we're not careful, we end up following the latest spiritual celebrity rather than Christ. There is no shortage of options out there. Social media can elevate someone to celebrity

status overnight. You can listen to any spiritual leader / teacher you want.

- Jesus is more impressed with who you're following not who you're quoting. We need to stay on mission.

Our world is in desperate need. We carry in us the only antidote for the brokenness of the human condition. The enemy loves to get the church sidetracked with other issues.

4. Mission Matters Because God Blesses It

James 1:25 "But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it." (NLT)

God blesses the doing of His word not the knowing of His word.

- Obedience to the mission results in blessing

To not obey and follow the very thing Jesus died on a cross for is to hinder the blessing of God upon our lives and churches.

- This is why understanding how God has called your church to follow the mission is so important. It's not enough for the Pastor or a few key people to follow it. The blessing of God is connected to following it.
- Every church that follows the mission follows it in a unique way. Foothills is no exception to this. We are here to reach the unchurched. Which simply means those who currently do not go. (Explain)
- It also means we have what I call an unchurched bias. This means we are very sensitive to the needs – thinking – wounds – fears – of unchurched people. We take that into consideration.
 - Take giving as an example - Explain
- The more obedience we have following the mission, the more blessing we will experience. I am convinced that the blessing we have experienced so far in our journey is in direct relation to our obedience to the mission.

- Faithfulness to the mission is a pathway to greater influence

Luke 19:16-17 "The first servant reported, 'Master, I invested your money and made ten times the original amount!'"¹⁷ "Well done!" the king exclaimed. "You are a good servant. You have been faithful with the little I entrusted to you, so you will be governor of ten cities as your reward." (NLT) (explain context)

- Because the servant was faithful with the responsibility given to him by his master, he was entrusted with even more responsibility. This principle is acting work in our church as well. As we continue to prove faithful to the mission Jesus entrusted to us, we will be granted even greater influence for His Kingdom.
- God is doing many wonderful things here at Foothills. That being said, we cannot allow these current blessings to create in us a complacency to continue chasing the mission. Oregon is still one of the most unchurched states in the US. Only 24-29% attend church.

We are in the mission field. God is asking us to trust Him at new levels. If we prove faithful, we will be entrusted with more influence for Him.

- The most important thing we can do right now is to be faithful; keep walking together in unity; keep chasing the mission; keep loving people; keep representing wherever we are.

As you think about your list of essentials, is mission part of this list? It needs to be. You and I have been given an assignment by Jesus Himself. It is the very reason He died on a cross. It is the only cure for the brokenness of our world. It hasn't been given to a select few. It was given to all. The mission mattered so much to Jesus that He gave His all. How much does the mission matter to you?

- Today, let's begin by accepting the mission. Let's make it personal. Tell God you accept your role in this mission. Tell Him you accept your calling.
- Ask Him to show you how to represent Him. The mission is the same, but how we represent God is unique to you. It matters!