

“Why the Church” - Week 11

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Why the Church: Mission”

This past February we began the series “Why The Church?” with the purpose being to allow it to align us as a church, not with a quick slogan or mission statement, but rather to let it remind us of the foundational elements we must have as a church family. Over the past few weeks and months, we have examined biblical core traits that we want to be known for and function by as a church body here at Rich Fork. These have included: Biblical Preaching, Evangelism & Discipleship, Prayer, Obedient Generosity, The Practices of Baptism & Lord’s Supper, Worship, Fellowship, Leadership, Membership and Accountability, and wraps up with the final trait of Mission. The ultimate mission of the church is found in Matthew 28:18-20 which reads, “18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Here at Rich Fork, we have tried to make the New Testament mission our mission when we say: “Shaping our community by sharing the grace of Jesus Christ.” The truth is that the world needs to hear the Gospel to believe the Gospel. As believers in Jesus Christ, in our maturity, a natural progression should be a nonstop desire to send the message, send the gospel, send people...go, go near, go far, but go...because there are still ears who need to hear. In this final week, we will look at Romans 10:1-17, which clearly lays out that in order for one to be saved, they must hear the good news of Jesus Christ, which also means that someone must be willing to go and tell them that good news. This is the ultimate mission of the church...to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Scripture - Romans 10:1-17

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. 5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study:

Psalms 96:1-6; Isaiah 12:4; Malachi 1:11; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 1:16 & 10:1-17; Colossians 1:28; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 4:2

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

Within the verses of Matthew 28:18-20, we see the authority and power to perform the mission, then the commands: Go, Make Disciples, Baptize, Teach, and essentially repeat because Jesus never said, "Once you complete this process one time, you don't have to do it again." The book of Acts in the New Testament makes it very clear that the early church did not stop or give up on Jesus' mission to them.

"Commitment to the Great Commission in our lives and churches involves a commitment of our lives and resources to get the Gospel to people who have not been reached." ~ David Platt, p. 160, 12 Traits.

As we read Romans 10 this week, keep in mind that The Apostle Paul wrote this passage for several reasons, one of which was to ensure that those in Rome—Jews and Gentiles—understood that the message of Jesus Christ was for all people, not just one religious group, contrary to what the Jews were teaching.

Righteousness: to put someone in a right standing with someone else. When a relationship is broken and reconciled, it happens through an act of righteousness. Someone does something, gives something, or pays something to place the person(s) in a clear, healed, and reconciled relationship. This theme is important throughout the Book of Romans, but it is still a struggle for us today. We want to earn our way into a right or mended relationship with God or anyone in our lives, but the writer of Romans says that's not the practice of Jesus; that is not God's hope, grace, and mercy. (Romans 10:1-8)

How does one enter into a right relationship with God? Believing. Believing what? (Romans 10:8-17). God sent His Son as a sacrifice and payment for our sins - the way of righteousness. All people have sinned and cannot have a relationship with God through their sin, but they can through the grace and forgiveness found through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Chapter ten is a reminder to convey that salvation comes by faith, not works, that works do not mend a broken relationship with God. Rather, surrender, by believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and confessing our sins places us in a right relationship with God.

The Gospel has still not reached the entire world. Billions do not believe; millions more only claim to believe in God but do not trust in Jesus Christ as their savior. Why has this happened? Persecution of Christians, Unwillingness of Christians to go, Fear of the unknown, Too comfortable in our day to day, and the Lack of urgency.

Key Thoughts

Have we forgotten the foundational truth? Those who do not turn from their sin will spend an eternity in Hell (Hell - eternal separation from God, destruction, darkness, despair, never-ending....). For some reason, we let this reality slip our minds, and with that slips the urgency to tell, to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ with those we encounter.

When we realize the right relationship we can have with God, why would we not be led to invite others to it? They don't need a missionary from another country; they need who God has already provided, that is us, right where we already are (across a fence in our backyard, sitting at a break table, riding on the school bus on a field trip, waiting for kids to finish with ball practice, dance rehearsal, gymnastics, etc.).

The sequence of events in Romans 10 follows:

- (1) messengers are sent;
- (2) they declare the Word;
- (3) sinners hear the Word;
- (4) sinners believe the Word;
- (5) they call upon Christ;
- (6) they are saved! (They come to hope in Christ.)
- (7) celebrate and the process repeats (see entire book of Acts!)

The reality is this:

- You cannot preach if you are not sent.
- People cannot hear what is not preached.
- They cannot believe what they cannot hear.
- They cannot respond to salvation and the right relationship with God if they cannot believe a message they cannot hear.
- They cannot be saved by what they cannot believe, cannot hear, what is not preached and was never sent.

You see, this is where we come in as the church.

This is where you come in as a church, built on all the traits we have examined and explored for months.

The world needs to hear the Gospel to believe the Gospel. This is our mission. May we all unite in all of these traits that we have discussed for the last 11 weeks that make this mission of Matthew 28:18-20 a priority.

Reflect & Respond

As you consider your relationship with the Lord, do you find that you are living truly under His righteousness and grace, or are you still attempting to live under the righteousness of man and good works? Where are you perhaps still living in ignorance and/or attempting to establish your own righteousness? Where do you perhaps take God's grace for granted? (See Romans 10:1-8)

Read Matthew 28:18-20. How does this apply to your life as a believer? What role are you helping to currently play in this mission? If you are not currently engaged in this, what is holding you back?

"When we realize the right relationship we can have with God, why would we not be led to invite others to it?" Who led you into a right relationship with Jesus Christ? Who are you currently leading? Who are you not leading that you should be? What is stopping you?

How does the church's mission to go and make disciples affect the way in which you live your life (in your marriage, in your family, at work, in your hobbies, in your local church, in your community, in the world)?

In the message this week, Pastor Michael said, "As believers in Jesus Christ, in our maturity, a natural progression should be a nonstop desire to send the message, send the gospel, send people....go, go near, go far, but go...because there are still ears who need to hear. As a church, we will send, we will go, but I pray we will not disobey." So the question is then, are you called to go, be sent, to pray, or disobey? Where are you currently? If disobeying, what needs to change?

Over the past eleven weeks, we have covered the following biblical traits of the church: Biblical Preaching, Evangelism & Discipleship, Prayer, Obedient Generosity, The Practices of Baptism & Lord's Supper, Worship, Fellowship, Leadership, Membership and Accountability, and Mission. As we finish this series up, are there any traits that you still have questions about or that you need further clarification on? If so, please discuss with your class/group leader and/or contact one of our pastors for further discussion as we would be happy to talk with you further.

As we work through this series, please know that you have **FREE access** to the book Twelve Traits: Embracing God's Design for the Church, by David Platt, which this series is taken from. You can find and download this short book for free at the link below and we encourage you to read through this with us throughout the series

https://radical-net-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/images/20220308095847/12Traits_Web.pdf

