

Series: Why Church Matters	Reference: John 17 & 20:21	Title: It's A Community On Mission	Date: 08.04.2019
Website Writeup: It's not about us, it's about God's Glory & God's Mission. We unify under Jesus for the sake of this unique calling which rises above all the blowing winds of teaching & emotion in culture!			

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We're in this short series, Why Church Matters, talking some foundational concepts. Our purpose, mission & vision as the local church. Last week we saw, we're here for God's Glory & God's Mission, and should explore that further. Because we don't just want a bigger church. We want to be a growing church focused on that to which Christ calls us. Today we look at John 17, a pre-crucifixion prayer of Jesus. Then, John 20:21, a post-resurrection command of Jesus. We're going to notice some simple, clear directives from Jesus for His church. As I read this first lengthy passage, follow along prayerfully as I read. Jesus is praying for us. If you doubt that, it will become clear. In John 17 it begins...

...he (Jesus) looked toward heaven & prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

There's a focus on *glory* - Son *glorifies* the Father - Father *glorifies* the Son for that purpose. Then Jesus speaks of His authority, reminding us of Matthew 28:18-20 which we've looked at in every sermon for the past few months. Jesus' work is finished, but the work of the church continues with Him embodied in it. Eternal life's outlined as knowing the Father through knowing the Son. All setting the stage for what Jesus prays next as He prays for His Disciples...

⁶ "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me & they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me & they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them & kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

Just before this Jesus states they'll have trouble in the world, but that they'll have peace within that struggle. When Christ speaks of safety, He's not talking about physical safety, but soul-safety. The soul's most safe when centered on God's purpose. No matter what happens to the body, or in life, if we press into Christ & His glory, working toward His mission, there's safety for our souls, because our souls are right with God & His purpose for us. He continues...

¹³ "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word & the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus places high value on Scriptural Truth. He states...it transforms us, causing us to evolve into what we were truly created to be - God's own children reflecting His heart & nature to the world = Glorifying Him. It sanctifies us, makes us holy. And we also know, the principles of God, fly right in the face of worldly thought creating tension. Most want to be liked, more than to be right with God. In that insecurity, we sacrifice the principles of God for the sake of acceptance, rather than glorifying God & being about His mission.

In following Christ we can expect hatred from certain individuals, disdain to Christ's life & message we carry. If everyone's happy with you, you may have a faith-integrity issue. Christ doesn't pray safety over our physical nature, reputations, emotions, or anything of the sort. He does pray safety from the Evil One; Satan can't destroy us as God's people. We're safely tucked under the wing of the heavenly Father. **This is why Jesus says, "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body & after that can do no more. ⁵ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell" (Lk 12:4-5).**

Finally, **Jesus says, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world," For the sake of Gods Glory & Mission.** He's prayerfully passing the baton, but like in all communication, it doesn't get through the first time. He will repeat this post-resurrection as we will see more than once, so it must be important! And, if we think for one second Jesus is only speaking to the Disciples, the next set of verses make clear He had us in mind when He prayed this prayer. Since at the end, Jesus wraps up this prayer for all believers, present & future...

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me & I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one - ²³ I in them & you in me - so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me & have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

Unity for Jesus is paramount. We spoke about it last week & in past sermons. We unite under Jesus, under God's glory & under God's mission. That & that alone is our message. That & that alone is our purpose, mission & vision. He ends with this...

²⁵ *“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them & that I myself may be in them.”*

This whole prayer is pre-crucifixion, before Christ goes to the cross. What He's praying for is a **Missionary Mentality** in His people, present & future. That we'd regard ourselves with a sense of 'Sent-ness'.

We know this not only from this passage, but many others, including John 20:21 where Jesus says ...*“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”* This is Post-Resurrection. He's gone to the cross, risen from the grave, and is now appearing before the Disciples whom He's taught, equipped & prepared for the Mission to which He is sending them!

Charles Spurgeon once said, *“Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter”* Good ol' Chuck didn't mean that every Christian is called to get on a plane flying to some remote place to do cross-cultural missions, although some are. Rather he meant, every Christian should regard themselves as being 'sent' on God's Mission for God's glory!

God sent Jesus. Jesus finished His redemptive work on the cross & in rising from the grave. Now the Church becomes His missionary force in all the local communities in which it finds itself planted. The local church, the hope of the world - to this end Christ prayed & taught for all believers over time. Which means...

#1 We Must Experience a Shift to Sent-ness! What's the motivation for the Christian life? What's this all about? Remember, God's on mission to make Himself known, to reveal His glory & disclose His love for all peoples. This sent-ness is seen clearly in the Great Commission in Mt 28:18-20, also a post-resurrection command - His Last Command, Our First Concern! *“All authority in heaven & on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Sent-ness has to be acknowledged by the people of God, or there's no reason for the Christian life. Without a sense of sent-ness, we miss the point. We shouldn't be surprised at our occasional mission drift from this. When the Church no longer regards

itself as a sent people on mission for God's glory in the world, but rather begins to exist for itself. Church exists not for the comfort of its members, or the perpetuation of its traditions, but to join Jesus on His mission to the nations, beginning right where we are with our neighbors in community & extending beyond to outside initiatives.

God's a sender by nature, a missionary God, local churches are His missionary outposts to their local communities! When we drift away from that, it's a leaders job to redirect our focus back to Christ's Glory & Mission. When we've birthed initiatives, programs, or habits which don't drive towards His mission, then we must shake the snow globe, reordering priorities. We change the way we do things for the sake of God's Glory & God's mission - so that we can intentionally go to people. We must think as a people sent on God's mission for the sake of Jesus in the world.

So, we begin to ask questions like, what would glorify God & help us be most on mission in our community? Bryn Mawr Days is coming up on Saturday, Sept 7th, 9:00a-2:00p, that's an opportunity to be about God's mission. Rachel will set up a prayer booth & Stef will be working on volunteers for the event from our church. All of our kingdom opportunities are chances to engage in the mission of God. We're not obnoxious, rather we are thoughtful & helpful, as we inject Jesus into the moment when the Spirit leads.

Like when Chuck & Christy were sitting with some people recently at a bar, listening to a man tell the painful story of possibly losing his daughter in a custody battle. Christy, to her own surprise & under the Spirits lead, piped up, "*Can we pray for you, right now!?!*" They did & left the man in tears. Chuck & Christy intentionally stepping out in risky faith, bringing the kingdom of God into a painful moment in a much needed way! Which brings me to my second point...

#2 We Must Experience A Shift Towards Missional Action

Simply this means we begin to live as people who are sent by God wherever we find ourselves. Whether that be at work, at play, with your neighbors, at a kingdom opportunity, or internally, in our community groups, worship service, or some other church activity. Sent-ness is a mark of true discipleship, of a person whose confidence is in Jesus & not self. A mark of ministry, knowing that we are always called, like Jesus, to intentionally usher in the kingdom of God in every situation we find ourselves.

Churches can sometimes adopt a consumer mentality. Where we think the church exists for us. What it gives us, what we get from it. Or that it adopts my own causes, affinities & passions, even if those aren't totally in line with Scripture. Even if our thinking is 1 degree off, that is an ever growing gap between us & Jesus. Remember, and I don't say this with malice, but for our benefit, we're not here to keep customers happy. Rather, we're here to equip people to take missional action in, through & beyond every situation in which we find ourselves...

We must regard ourselves as Paul spoke in Ephesians 4 where he says...

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble & gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the

unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body & one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God & Father of all, who is over all & through all & in all. (vv1-6)

Leaders must additionally regard themselves in this role where Paul continues...

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors & teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith & in the knowledge of the Son of God & become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back & forth by the waves, and blown here & there by every wind of teaching & by the cunning & craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined & held together by every supporting ligament, grows & builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (vv11-16)

If you've even swum below the surface on a wave filled beach, your tossed back & forth in the current. That's what it means to be caught up in all the various teachings & causes the world throws at us. But the Gospel is supra-cultural, it rises above the waves, as a higher calling as each part of the Body does its work for God's Glory & God's Mission which Jesus clearly states over & over! It's not about us, our desires, affinities & pet causes, it's about Jesus & His mission. It's not leadership's job to decide what everyone is doing, but to get everybody doing & taking missional action. Which leads us to our 3rd & final point...

#3 We Need To Experience A Shift Away From Customer Service. Many think the church exists for their customer needs, but again, it's not about us, it's about God's glory & God's mission. William Temple once said, "Church is one of the few institutions that exists for the benefit of those who are not yet a part of it." That's exactly right. We exist for what Matthew 28:18-20 calls us...to go & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all Jesus commands. It's a rescue mission from a purposeless life, to a purposeful life. People find Jesus, assimilate into the Body of Christ, and are transformed in His character, becoming about His Glory & Mission as well.

We can't expect perfection, or to get there tomorrow - this isn't something we achieve, it's something we strive for - the goal isn't to get to perfection, but to stay on mission. We gotta walk & chew gum at the same time. We work on our own spiritual formation not to feel better about ourselves, or make life easier for us, but in order that we become useful tools in the hands of God in His mission to the world for the sake of His glory!

Jesus prayed for us! He commissioned us! He sent us. As Jesus was *sent* in the world so He sends us into the world for the sake of Gods Glory & Mission. Which means we must experience...**#1 a Shift to Sent-ness. #2 a Shift Towards Missional Action. And #3 a Shift Away from Customer Service.**

We must preach our calling often. We never get something the first time, the second, or even the hundredth, it must be constantly reinforced, becoming our communal DNA.

We need to provide opportunities. We do a lot of this at Six:Eight through community groups, worship, prayer & kingdom opportunities, and through relationships. It's up to us to engage, pushing through fear, trusting the Holy Spirit, as we live risky faith with one another & people in our community! On Mission with God, for His Glory.

I sent an email out to leadership & a few other key people the other day regarding our retreats next spring. Rob Shaeffer, responding to the Holy Spirit, wrote this, which I want to make the theme for our men's & women's retreats...

"...thinking about our next retreat. The word Risk kept coming to mind & it has in general recently...What does it mean to take healthy risk? For a lot of us in our current life stages, I think risk comes in relationship. Can I let my friends/wife/girlfriend/church community/even God know who I really am? Even if it's not a secret sin, can I be myself? Can I respond to the thing that God has been tugging at in me for years & years? Can I share what Jesus is doing in my life when they ask me a question about how things are going? Can I risk setting aside my ingrained beliefs about _____ to learn & dive into what Jesus really has to say about them? Can I risk sharing my heart with another & with Jesus?"

Rob's speaking of *courage* in our spiritual formation in Christ. How courageous are we at being real in following Jesus since only He's truly freeing, and therefore, attractive to others - Christian & non-Christian alike. We're person-centered on Christ, not problem-centered on issue. Vinnie shared a quote recently, can't remember who said it, but it goes something like this...*"To lead someone to Christ, we firstly have to journey far into His kingdom & gaze upon His face."* Love that! Living Risky Faith, that's our theme as we head into those retreats, since we want to be an authentic people living risky faith on Christ's mission. A people of spiritual power having been in His presence, like Moses' glow when coming off the mountain & in the presence of God!

Lastly, **We make structural change where & when necessary.** Course-correcting as we navigate the waters of life in order to steer ourselves toward Jesus. Asking ourselves - is everything we do only internally focused & all about us? Or, is everything we do driving towards God's Glory & Mission? Do we teach this from the pulpit, in small groups & pray it often? Is His last command our first concern? When you cut us, do we bleed Christ's missional call, and if not, we readjust in order to do so because it's not about us, it's about God's Glory & God's Mission.