

09 | Mission Evangelism



BOOTCAMP
Basic training for new and growing Christians

Introduction

“Good morning Mister Phelps. Your mission, should you choose to accept it is to save the world from the clutches of the mad-scientist Dr. Death. As always, should you be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions. This tape will self-destruct in five seconds. Good luck, Jim.”

Almost everyone recognizes the theme music from the hugely popular 60’s television series ‘Mission Impossible’. The series was about a team of secret agents sent on seemingly impossible missions, equipped with an arsenal of weird and wonderful gadgets at their disposal. At the end of each show, the IMF team somehow always succeeded in their missions and saved the day. The impossible missions weren’t impossible after all, or else the series wouldn’t have lasted very long at all.

As Christians we can become discouraged when we think of the state of moral decay in the cities and nations we live in. Even the thought of seeing our friends and families saved and walking in the plans and purposes of God seems literally impossible, an impossible mission. This study takes a new look at the greatest mission on earth, the Great Commission, and will show us that it isn’t an impossibility at all. That the Great Commission is, in fact, mission possible! (Theme music starts now.)

The mission

The dictionary defines the word ‘mission’ as:

- **A special assignment given to a person or group.**

The following verses are known as ‘the Great Commission’, Jesus’ mission given to His disciples:

¹⁸Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰Teach 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.”
Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

¹⁵And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere. ¹⁶Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned. ¹⁷These signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak new languages. ¹⁸They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won’t hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick and heal them.” ¹⁹When the Lord Jesus had finished talking with them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand. ²⁰And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked with them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs.
Mark 16:15-20 (NLT)

You may be thinking that the Great Commission doesn’t apply to you. You may think that it only applies to the twelve disciples. You may be thinking that a disciple of Jesus is an elite breed of super-spiritual Christian...

The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. **Acts 11:26b (NIV)**

Scripture makes no distinction. Disciple of Jesus = Christian. They are the same thing. If you are a Christian, you are a Disciple of Christ and the Great Commission applies to you.

The Great Commission is the mission that Jesus has given to all believers everywhere. We are on a mission from God, but how do we fulfil our mission? The answer is simply to be Jesus’ hands and feet.

¹⁴You are the light of the world—like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. ¹⁵Don’t hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. ¹⁶In the

same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. Matthew 5:14-15 (NLT)

So many people know about the Gospel. This world needs to see Christians actually living the Gospel!

Missionary

We usually think of a missionary as someone who travels into the deepest darkest part of Africa to live in a mud hut and tell the natives about Jesus, or someone who risks life and limb smuggling backpacks full of Bibles into Communist countries. Yes, these people are definitely missionaries, but the true definition of a missionary is:

- **One who is sent on a mission.**

It is a very common misunderstanding to believe that the Great Commission applies to only those who are called to full-time ministry, like pastors, travelling evangelists, overseas missionaries etc.. The truth is...

If you are Christian, you are a missionary, and if you are a Christian, you are in full-time ministry!

There is no such thing as a part-time Christian. You either give your whole life to Jesus, or you don't. There is no such thing as part-time ministry. You are either in full-time ministry or you're not. Let me explain. Regardless of who you are, where you live, or what you do, you are living to fulfil the Great Commission, to be Jesus' hands and feet to your sphere of influence, and lifestyle.

¹¹Dear brothers and sisters, you are foreigners and aliens here. So I warn you to keep away from evil desires because they fight against your very souls. 1 Peter 2:11 (NLT)

The story is told about some Christians who were travelling in the Middle East. They heard about a wise, devout, beloved, old believer, so they went out of their way to visit him. When they finally found him, they discovered that he was living in a simple hut. All he had inside was a simple bed, a chair, a table, and a battered stove for heating and cooking. The visitors were shocked to see how few possessions the man had, and one of them blurted out, "Well, where is your furniture?" The aged saint replied by gently asking: "Where is yours?" The visitor, spluttering a little, responded, "Why, at home, of course. I don't carry it with me, I'm just passing through here." "So am I," the godly Christian replied. "So am I."¹

Mission-field

We often think of the mission-field as someplace overseas, someplace away from where we live. Someplace far away, remote and primitive like the Amazon basin. In reality, the mission-field is not just overseas, it's anywhere where people need saving and discipling. That makes your school, workplace, the beach, and your home... a mission-field! The mission-field is:

- **Anywhere people need saving and discipling.**

God in His infinite wisdom has pre-destined us to have different occupations, to live in different locations, to come from different backgrounds and cultures so that His Church can effectively fulfil the Great Commission. If every Christian worked in church buildings, most people would never be exposed to the Gospel. If every Christian isolated himself completely from the un-saved, Satan would be dancing with joy. You may be the only Christian that the people in your classroom, neighbourhood or workplace come into contact with and can be influenced by. God has placed you there to expose them to the love of God and the Good News of the Gospel. I wonder how many Christians are failing their mission?

Summary

Let's review what we've learned so far...

- **A mission is a special assignment or task given to an individual or group of people.**
- **Jesus gave His disciples the greatest mission of all time, the Great Commission, to fulfil.**

- **A disciple of Christ is a Christian.**
- **We live to fulfil the mission by being Jesus' hands and feet.**
- **A missionary is one who is sent on a mission.**
- **We are all missionaries.**
- **If we call ourselves a Christian, we are in full-time ministry regardless of what we do or who we are.**
- **The mission-field is any place people need saving and discipling.**
- **God has placed us in different occupations and locations to fulfil the Great Commission.**

How to be a missionary, fulfilling the mission, in your mission-field

1. Remember the mission!

It's tragic that so many Christians have forgotten the mission. Consider the following...

Martin Luther had a parable or dream of an occasion when the devil sat on his throne listening to the reports of his agents and ambassadors and what progress they had made in opposing the truth of Christ and destroying the souls of men. One demon said there had been a company of Christians crossing the desert. "I loosed the lions upon them, and soon the sands of the desert were strewn with their mangled corpses."

"So what?" answered Satan. "The lions destroyed their bodies, but their souls were saved. It is there souls I am after."

Then another demon made his report. He said: "There was a company of Christian pilgrims sailing through the sea on a vessel. I sent a great wind against the ship which drove the ship on the rocks, and every Christian aboard the ship was drowned."

"So what?" said Satan. "Their bodies were drowned in the sea, but their souls were saved. It is their souls I am after."

Then a third demon came forward to give his report, and he said: "For ten long years I have been trying cast a Christian into a deep spiritual sleep, and at last I have succeeded." And with that the corridors of hell rang with shouts of malignant triumph.²

Please, never forget the mission. Don't just tack Jesus onto your life as an insurance policy against hell. Live to fulfil the Great Commission. That's why you're alive.

2. Think of the honour and privilege!

If an earthly king chose you for a special mission, you would feel deeply honoured and privileged. The King of Kings has chosen you to be a part of the greatest mission! To partner with Him in seeing His Kingdom come and His will be done is an amazing honour. You have been chosen by God to be His hands and feet in your sphere of influence. If you weren't the best person for the task, God would have chosen someone else.

3. Preach with your life!

Preach the gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words. Francis of Assisi

Witnessing is so much more than just telling people about Jesus. Witnessing is telling people about Jesus with your words, and more importantly with your life.

The single greatest cause of Atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, and walk out the door, but deny it by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable. DC Talk

Don't disqualify with your actions, what you say with your mouth.

4. Pray for opportunities

¹⁰*Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone, especially to our Christian brothers and sisters. Galatians 6:10 (NLT)*

¹⁶*Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. Ephesians 5:16 (NLT)*

⁵*Live wisely among those who are not Christians, and make the most of every opportunity. Colossians 4:5 (NLT)*

Pray for opportunities to be Jesus' hands and feet at your work, school, and home. And be ready when your prayer is answered!

5. Be available now

Some common excuses for not being serious about living the Great Commission...

- "My time hasn't come yet to walk into God's calling for my life."
- "I don't know enough about God."
- "I haven't been to Bible College."
- "I'm too young/old"
- "I'm only a new Christian."
- "I'm just not ready."

Be ready and available now. Tomorrow may never come.

6. Realise the stakes are high

It was late in December, 1996. A large family gathered in Los Angeles for the joyous occasion of wrapping Christmas presents. It was a big family because it was the product of two marriages. There were so many gathered that night, five of the children slept in the garage. It was a converted structure, kept warm during the cold night by an electric heater which sat by the door. During the early hours of the morning, the heater suddenly burst into flames, blocking the doorway. In seconds the room became a blazing inferno. The frantic 911 call revealed the unspeakable terror of the moment. One of the children could be heard screaming, "I'm on fire!" The distraught father vainly rushed into the flames to try and save his beloved children. He received burns to 50% of his body. Tragically, all five of the children burnt to death. They died because steel bars on the windows of the garage thwarted their escape. There was only one door, and that was stopped by flames.

You are back in time. It is minutes before the heater burst into flames. You peer through the darkness at the peaceful sight of the five sleeping youngsters. You know that at any moment the room is going to erupt into an inferno, and burn the flesh of horrified children. Can you in good conscience walk away? No! You must awaken them, and warn them to run from that death trap! The world sleeps peacefully in the darkness of their ignorance. There is only one door by which they may escape death. The steel bars of sin prevent their salvation, and at the same time call for the flames of Eternal Justice. What a fearful thing Judgement Day will be! The fires of the wrath of Almighty God will burn for eternity. The Church has been entrusted with the task of awakening them before it is too late. We cannot turn our back and walk away in complacency. Think of how the father ran into the flames. His love knew no bounds, and our devotion to the sober task that God has given us will be in direct proportion to our love for the lost. There are only a few who run headlong into the flames to warn them to flee (Luke 10:2). Please be one of them. We really have no choice. The Apostle Paul said, "Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). It was Charles Spurgeon, who said the words, "Have you no wish for others to be saved. Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that." A Christian cannot be apathetic about the salvation of the world. The love of God in him will motivate him to seek and save that which is lost.³

7. Take up the cross daily

²³Then Jesus said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross daily, and follow me. ²⁴If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life. ²⁵And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose or forfeit your own soul in the process? ²⁶If a person is ashamed of me and my message, I, the Son of Man, will be ashamed of that person when I return in my glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.

Luke 9:23-26 (NLT)

How many of us really take the above verses seriously?

I have found that the casual Christian has little or no influence upon others. I am finding that it is only the Christian who refuses to compromise in matters of honesty, integrity and morality who is bearing an effective witness for Christ. The worldly Christian is prepared to do as the world does because he is afraid of the world's displeasure. Only by a life of obedience to the voice of the Spirit, by daily dying to self, by a full dedication to Christ and constant fellowship with Him, are we able to live a godly life and have a positive influence in this present ungodly world.⁴

Conclusion

I have no doubt in my mind that if every Christian truly lived to fulfil the Great Commission, if they saw themselves as missionaries, and their workplace, schools, and homes as mission-fields, this world would be a very different place. Think about it, and make the following song lyrics (by Audio Adrenaline) your fervent prayer...

*I want to be Your hands
I want to be Your feet
I'll go where You send me
I'll be Your hands
I'll be Your feet
I'll go where You send me
And I'll try to touch the world
Like You touched my life
And I'll find my way
To be Your hands...*

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- ¹ Our Daily Bread, July 26, 1993
- ² Adapted from Chariots of Fire, by Clarence E. McCartney, Nashville: Abingdon, 1951, pp 50, 51
- ³ Ray Comfort, *Save Yourself Some Pain*, (Living Waters Publications), 10-12
- ⁴ Unto the Hills, by Billy Graham