

INTRODUCTION

I have been convicted this last week of an attitude:

- I had to give up a lot of things to go to the field... Chic-Fil-a, Netflix America, Amazon Prime.
- I caught myself saying “I deserve to watch this, I deserve to buy this, I deserve to eat this.... because I haven’t had access to it.
15 lbs. later...
- Was struck by this “I deserve” attitude. How fast that can overtake us when we give in to it...
- it’s the same continuous problem through centuries.

BABEL- I MUST CREATE A NAME FOR MYSELF

Babylon- We see this ancient city, with its focus on beauty exalted, pleasures indulged, intelligence magnified...

In the fall of Babylon, you see the prophet Isaiah recognize this

49:8 “Now then, listen, you lover of pleasure, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, ‘I am, and there is no one else.’”

HOW FAST this same attitude comes upon me!

DANIEL- TAKEN INTO EXILE, INTO A FOREIGN LAND

King commanded wisest, most competent- nobility of Israel to serve him as eunuchs. He even offered them the best food and best wine of the Kings table!

Daniel 1:8 “But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank.”

Daniel said no. He resolved. He CHOSE to refrain. You see, God had commanded a diet for Israelites, similar to vegan. He wanted to honor God with his life, even when offered the finest pleasures. He willingly sacrificed.

SIDEBAR- this is not an attack on rest, rest is good, commanded, and necessary. There is also a time to work. *Ecclesiastes 3: A time to plant, and a time to uproot, A time to tear down, a time to build*

HE MUST INCREASE, I MUST DECREASE. JOHN 3:30

HE MUST BECOME GREATER, I MUST BECOME LESS

This is the attitude of us, Christians. This is the attitude I often lack. I ask you the question today:

- Is Christ increasing in your life?
- How does it show to those around you?
- ARE YOU SHOWING THE WORLD THAT YOU ARE DECREASING?
- How does this play out in your life here in RDU?

Now I am grateful to be talking to a group of women who have already shown their willingness to sacrifice- have heard their call to disciple others. It's in the Great Commission. The Greatest Commandment. Thank you for your service to this church- we on staff want you to hear this. Thank you!

OUR GOD IS A SENDING GOD

God sent his best into the world to save us! Jesus Christ

- Jesus is referred as "sent" 44 times in NT
- After his resurrection, then to his disciples: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21)
- To follow Jesus is to be sent.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SENT AND MISSIONARY

We often think of this as overseas, a missionary, that's how we call our people, a missionary, someone who strategically crosses cultures for church planting.

But we call ALL of our people to be sent out, to go outside the camp and bear the glorious name of Christ.

This is to laypeople, if our people are not going "outside the camp" as Hebrew 13:13 commands, we are not doing our job.

Coming to Jesus is to come and die. It's sacrificial.

It's not through our success that God saves the world but through our sacrifices. He calls us to an altar, not a platform.

What we achieve by building our personal platform will never be as great as what God achieves through what we give away in faith

EVERYONE IS CALLED.

It's common for us in Christianity to speak of the "missionary" as a sacred, spiritual title. The Seal Team Six of the Christian life. Obviously, we want to honor our missionaries and hold the rope for them but we have to understand that the Great Commission is not some special calling for the elite but a mandate for us all.

IT'S THROUGH REGULAR PEOPLE!

Obviously, there are instances in Scripture where God calls people to a specific mission.

- God with Abraham to the Promised Land (Gen 12:1)
- Paul to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15)

But, we more often than not see in scripture as a command for all.

“Follow me,” Jesus said, “And I will make you fishers of men.”

Regular people “went everywhere preaching the word,” while the apostles stayed in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1–4). Ok...that’s my paraphrase...it actually says:

“On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church of Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria...

The first time the gospel actually went out into the world, not a single apostle was involved.

We see regular people involved in short-term trips! The first “international mission trip” was taken later in that same chapter by Philip, another layman. The Spirit carried him to a desert road where he met an Ethiopian government official, and Philip led him to Christ.

Heavenly movie theatre- I want to see the Ethiopians’ face when he saw Philip! I mean, imagine driving down Hwy 40 in your Honda Horse Carriage...and BAM. It’s amazing. God shows up always.

The church at Antioch, which served as the hub for missionary activity for the last half of the book of Acts, was not planted by an apostle, but simply “some brothers,” whose names Luke did not even bother to record—presumably because no one would have known whom he was talking about.

Apollos, a layman, first carried the gospel into Ephesus, and unnamed brothers first established the church at Rome. These Christians didn’t travel to Rome on a formal mission trip, but were carried there through the normal relocations that come with business and life. As they went, they made disciples in every place (Acts 8:5–8; 18:24–19:1; 28:15).

WOMEN – Apollos has an encounter with Priscilla and Aquilla in Acts 18... He was an eloquent man, competent in Scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord, fervent in Spirit...BUT he only knew of John’s baptism...didn’t know the whole story.

P&A called him over to the house for a good dinner of some camel burgers, fattened him up and says, *“explained the way of God to him more accurately.”*

Hospitality first... correction second...in LOVE

EVERYONE, REGULAR PEOPLE ARE CALLED INTO THE MISSION OF GOD.

Too many Christians sit around waiting on a “voice” to tell them what God has already spelled out in a verse.

GOOOOOOO... therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

The question is no longer IF we are called to leverage our lives for the Great Commission; it's only **WHERE** and **HOW**.

That means we regularly tell our people:

- “Do what you do well for the glory of God and do it somewhere strategic for the mission of God.” I am imagining y'all have heard that before somewhere ;)
- “Put your eyes on the table and let God put it on the map”

Missiologists frequently refer to a “10/40 window” in which the most unreached peoples live (lying between the 10 and 40-degree latitude lines). For business leaders, the 10/40 window isn't a window at all; it's a wide-open door.

God may not call you to leave the United States (though he might!). But if you're a believer, he is calling you to follow him where he goes, as he seeks to make his name known. Whether you're an investment banker or a full-time ministry leader, a stay-at-home mom, or an overseas missionary, God has a mission for you.

From Raleigh-Durham to Russia, the responsibility to think that way belongs to every believer.

- As we often say, “Whatever you are good at, do it well for the glory of God, and do it somewhere strategic for the mission of God.”
- It's time for the “ordinary believers” in our churches to recover the understanding that they are called to the mission and shaped by God for a specific role in that mission. The question is no longer **IF** we are called to leverage our lives for the Great Commission; it's only a matter of **WHERE** and **HOW**.

AND PRAISE GOD FOR THE POWER THAT SENDS US

He will be with us to the end of the age! We are not in this alone!

In John 14:12, Jesus made an astounding statement to his disciples: *“Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”*

Now, for one second, can we take off our church member facade and admit that sounds weird.

- Who wouldn't want to have Jesus on staff?

- Who has done “greater works” than Jesus?
- Anyone here raised someone from the dead?
- Fed 5000?
- Cast out a demon?

Of course not! This means that “greater” can’t mean “greater” in quality; it has to mean greater in quantity. What Jesus was alluding to was that when he ascended to heaven, the Spirit of God, who was the source of even Jesus’ power on earth, would not be limited to one person (Jesus), or even a group (the disciples), but would dwell within every believer. Every believer would now minister in the full power of the Spirit, and the result would produce a greater net effect than if even Jesus himself had stayed on earth.

Our job is to release that power.

Ephesians 4:12-13 equip the saints to do the work of the ministry...my job is essentially this...to help you find ways to do ministry.

Director of Sending- hopefully, I am helping “directing” you on opportunities of how to be SENT.

SO the question remains.... How do you do it?

HOW DO WE AT SUMMIT CHURCH PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE?

- Sending Culture Meets Sending Practice
- In the sermon
- Have I connected this text to mission?

If Jesus is mentioned throughout all of scripture, then pointing people to the Good News that He came to seek and to save people, the sending component is in all sermons.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH NEWS? YOU SHARE IT.

I mean, have you seen Instagram and Facebook and Snapchat and Twitter--- we LOVE TO SHARE!

Preaching brings people the water of life – not just a refreshing spring for their own thirst – but a rushing river which they jump in and are carried to the nations.

JD doesn’t do a “missions sermon” each year. Instead he includes a mission, sending, church planting in every sermon. (my part in helping to plan)

- We can also celebrate that a woman is in those meetings, right- “hey, that’s probably going to come out this way....”
- Worship Services

- Highlight missions' stories and testimonies;
- We SING praises to the God who is MIGHTY TO SAVE. GOD OF OUR CITY.
- Prayer night at Brier Creek- so fired up after going through a list of celebration of the things he has done in our midst: Brier Creek couple- 34 apartments; 3 refugee families (9 kids), 6 women in crisis, prisoners' transitional housing
- You replicate what you celebrate – greatest celebration is when people leave the church
- We are going tonight to N Raleigh to watch a family be sent into Africa, the same night he baptizes his daughter. HALLELUJAH, WHAT A SAVIOR.
- You are sent

GIVING

Prosperity Gospel - tend to give out of greed, "You drive a Toyota, give to God and you drive a BMW."

Baptist out of guilt – do you know how many unreached people groups, starving kids, and programs we can start...

We connect giving to mission – whether across the street or across the globe – we celebrate how much money we give away

- 30 French copies of MP3 Bibles, 20 French copies of JD's Gospel "Evangile"

SMALL GROUPS

Small groups attached to a ServeRDU project, (which by the way, now is the time to go online and see our new platform of displayed projects around the city)

Adopt a planter- be an advocate

Summit small group adopted me and sent me and my small group to a getaway after a hard season of ministry

We don't start new groups, we plant new groups

STTs together

LET'S TALK ABOUT SHORT-TERM TRIPS FOR A MINUTE. We are adding more every day, and are revamping the whole site as to how it will be displayed.

People change on STT. It changes you. You go to serve them, and it serves you as well. He who refreshes others is himself refreshed.

HOW?

MOMS

We want to help you go. We want to guilt, I mean talk to your husbands about watching the kids for a few days. The moms overseas LOVE hearing from you.

SINGLES

Let me just break down something. You don't think you can go? 60% families, 40% of singles. Of that 40%73% are single women, and it only gets higher in the 10/40. YOU CAN GO. I am living proof.

Encourage entire SGs to go together. As that small group that supported me started serving me as an advocate, they got broken to come. SO THEY CAME! Helped me move home. Amazing.

MINISTRIES

Kids – going on first mission trip w/ parents

Students – go overseas for 3 weeks

College – give us one semester, one summer, and the first two years after graduation (Mormonization)

PRAYER

Our primary prayer strategy

Prayer book of missionaries- pray for them. It does things. It changes things. We can track the tangible prayers in the Boiler Room back to when things happened overseas.

Missions is no longer simply a ministry of the church, missions is the ministry of the church.

Next Steps

What 3 values or practices could you implement right away?

GIVING TREE

You have all read the Giving Tree. If you haven't, you should judge your parents.

In Shell Silberstein's amazing novel... you see this beautiful, fruit bearing tree and a little boy, swinging on the tree; they are best friends.

Little boy grows older- I don't want to play anymore, tree happy to see him.

I need money, well I have apples! You can take them and sell them. Boy goes away, happy.

Young man come back, tree is so excited "do you want to play, swing on the branches like the old days, etc.- I want to see the world! I need a boat to sail the world...I have these beautiful branches you can cut and make a boat. Young man takes his advice, uses his branches, sails around the world.

Time passes, comes back. Tree is so happy, I don't have branches anymore...but I am so happy to see you! Grown man- I've seen the world now, I want to settle down, I need a house! Well I don't have a house to give you, but you can chop down my trunk and use the lumber to build a home- so he does.

The tree is now just a stump. Nothing more to give. Seems like a pretty dire situation for the tree.

In the final scene, the little boy who has grown up and become an old man now...comes back to the tree, crutch in his hand...tree is so happy to see him... and he says to the old man "I've given you everything for your happiness, I have nothing left to give! All I am is a stump.

The old man has run the course of his life, the passions and lusts of life, and he says "THAT'S OK, I JUST NEED A PLACE TO REST"

And the little boy and tree are friends once again.

HERE IS THE PARABLE

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is that tree. For centuries, millennia, the Christian tradition has been a leafy green tree to our culture...giving, giving, giving. People aren't even aware of all the gifts that have come from the Christian faith to the world.

Missionaries to all over the world, rescuing orphans, the sick, the helpless, the marginalized, the persecuted.

To the cities- influencing political systems, democracy, free markets, constitutions,
Local outreach- homeless, women in crisis, prisoners. Etc.

THIS FLOWS FROM THE BIBLE

Sooner or later, when all these pleasures have run their course...what will people want...
SHALOM. They want PEACE.

PEACE IS REST. If we do our jobs the right way, it will be the people of God, sitting at the center of cultures, saying "HERE IS A PLACE TO REST."

BUT WE HAVE TO BE THERE WHEN THAT REQUEST COMES

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a brilliant pastor and theologian, at the rise of Nazi power in Germany, had a chance, to accept a cushy job at NYC at Union Seminary to be a professor and escape the horrors of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany.

BUT HE TOOK THE LAST. BOAT. OUT. BEFORE THE WAR BEGAN. Before they closed down entry in to Germany, because if I do not suffer with the people during this great time of trial, when we finally defeat Hitler, I will have no place at the table for the future of the German people. So he takes the last boat out... takes an undercover position in the German equivalent of the CIA. in an assassination plot to kill Hitler.

That was that Tom Cruise movie that didn't include Bonhoeffer. BLEH. It's because he is a Scientologist. (ha) We don't expect Bonhoeffer to be in that movie.

Bonhoeffer gets arrested, caught, put in prison, sent to a concentration camp, where he is hung to death for being involved in this plot, essentially for his faith.

Writing to his best friend, Eberhard Bethge, here is someone who is paying with his life for what he believes, says this-

The Christian should not be cloistered and secluded in his holy huddle, but rather the Christian should be in the thick of his foes, in the center of the village, from which all the powers go out.

- Where was Paul?
- Where was Peter?
- Where was Deborah?
- Where was David?
- Where was William Wilberforce?
- Where was Adoniram Judson
- Where was Helen Roseveare?
- Where was Martin Luther King Jr.?
- Where was Lottie Moon?

WHERE WAS JESUS when he did the greatest work of atonement on the cross?
He was in the thick of his foes. He went outside the camp.

ARE WE THERE TODAY? ARE WE BEING SENT OUTSIDE THE CAMP?

Let's pray.