

We R2B a Missional People

Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 13:1-3

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Introduction

Big Idea: God has initiated a grand mission of rescue, redemption, and restoration, and He invites us to be His empowered partners in extending His kingdom to the ends of the earth.

The Problem: People need the Lord! They just don't know it. For 30 years, Sharon and I served as missionaries to Japan. We saw some fruit, but we also saw a lot of brokenness, loneliness, despair, injustice, spiritual bondage. Humanity is lost, separated from God, and suffering the consequences of sin. Humanity is in need of something profound.

The Answer: The *Missio Dei*, or the **Mission of God**, is simple, yet profound: **to rescue, redeem, and restore broken humanity**. The Bible, God's Word, serves as our history, plan, love letter, and guide for this incredible restoration. Even before creation, God had a meticulously designed plan! From the very beginning, God's *Missio Dei* has been to call people into a relationship with Him. God is relentlessly calling, always working, and consistently inviting! His ultimate desire is for everyone to accept the free-gift of salvation offered through Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:4-6, Romans 10:13).

Today, we're going to explore God's mission and our participation in **Rescue, Redemption, and Restoration**.

1. RESCUE: The Urgency of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)

A. All Authority, All Nations (v. 18-19a):

Jesus' Authority: Jesus, risen from the dead, possesses *all* authority. This isn't a suggestion; it's the ultimate statement of His messiahship, His authorization from Yahweh-God! He Is the I AM!

This IS the *Missio Dei*, the Mission of God!

Francis Schaeffer identified two central themes within the Christian worldview: a **major theme** of hope, triumph, and restoration through Jesus Christ, and a **minor theme** of the brokenness, sin, and suffering present in the world. These themes are not mutually exclusive but rather coexist, acknowledging both the promise of redemption and the realities of life in a fallen world.

The **major theme IS the intervention of God, the goodness of God, the Joy of knowing Him! The rich intimacy of knowing Him and the substantial healing of our humanity on this side of His return! The One overarching major theme: the rescue of broken humanity. One by one, over the millennia, as long as it takes.**

The **minor theme** is brokenness and being stuck trying to figure out how to control everything. Satan wants to convince you there is no goodness of God.

Evil wants you to believe the minor theme is the only theme! For example: Your child getting good grades does not make it onto the evening news. A young man giving up his seat on the metro for an older person does not make the headlines.

What makes the news is the minor theme stuff... things that look and feel like they are the major theme, especially when you are in the middle of them.

Our tendency is to ignore, stuff down, run away, hide, or deny...

How do we get back into the major theme?

Accept His invitation! Enter into His Kingdom, His story, His theme! Re-focus on Christ!

Ask God to restore your joy, David wrote, ***"Restore the joy of your salvation to me, and provide me with a spirit of willing obedience."*** (Psalm 51:12 GW).

Restore my hope, restore my perspective. Help me take my focus off the minor (all this happening around me) and set my focus, my hope on you!

I said last week, *"When we pray, God does awesome things, right?"* Then a sub-thought... *"if we don't pray, He isn't going to do awesome things."* **I need to correct that!** What I should have said is *"if we are not praying, we are missing out."* Our prayers do not control God, He does mighty works whether we pray or not... God is active and alive in our world, brings about His Mission, His will, and His plan! Prayer is coming into union with Him! Our Loving-Father invites us to pray... to agree with Him!

The Scope: "All Nations": The mission isn't just for our local church or neighborhood, but for everyone, everywhere. This speaks to the global need for salvation.

The Urgency of Lostness: People are dying without Christ. They need to be rescued from the dominion of darkness (Colossians 1:13). This is the foundation of the Great Commission – an urgent call to rescue people out of danger.

B. The Mandate: "Make Disciples, teaching them to obey!" (v. 19b-20):

More than just decisions: It's about making **apprentices to Jesus** who are **baptized** and **taught to obey**. This is a process of bringing people into a new way of life, a new nature.

Our role in Rescue: We are the messengers, the rescuers sent by Christ to share the lifeline of the Gospel.

Going beyond casual conversation: When is the last time you had a **spiritual conversation?** ... with a fellow disciple of Jesus? ... with a seeker?

You may be thinking, "but I can't do that!" You are not alone!

C. The Promise: "I am with you always" (v. 20):

We don't go alone or in our own strength. Jesus' presence empowers and reassures us in this daunting task of rescue.

We go together... You need a band of brothers or of sisters!!! We were never intended to make this journey alone!

So, we are commanded to go and rescue, but how are we equipped for such a monumental task? Acts 1:8 gives us the answer:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

2. REDEMPTION: Empowered for a Purpose (Acts 1:8)

A. The Promise of Power:

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you": This isn't self-help or human effort. It's supernatural empowerment

What kind of power? Not just for personal holiness, but specifically for **witnessing**. Power to speak, to live, to demonstrate the truth of Christ.

Connecting to Redemption: The power of the Spirit enables us to participate in God's redemptive work. He paid the price; we announce the freedom purchased. Redemption means being bought back from slavery to sin and death. Free indeed!

B. The Scope of Witness:

"Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth": This is a geographical and relational progression.

Jerusalem: Our immediate circles –family, friends, neighbors.

Judea/Samaria: Beyond our comfort zone –different cultures, perhaps those we might initially avoid.

Ends of the Earth: A global vision, reaching every tribe and tongue.

C. The Cost of Redemption:

This power isn't just for speaking; it's for enduring, for serving, for sacrificing, just as Christ redeemed us through His sacrifice. "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe."

My challenge: Do I keep the messages simple and just introduce the Gospel? Or do I go deep?

Striking the balance is hard! How can you help?

If you are a sincere follower of Christ (we won't have a show of hands), then you R2B a disciple maker...

Take the Word, the themes, the discussion questions to a deeper level with a small group of people! Yes, Yes, Yes!!! You really should be in a small group! This is not a guilt trip, I know it is hard in our city, in our fast-pace world. I get it... it is a matter of spiritual life or death!

We have the power and the command. But how does this mission actually get started and sustained in the church? Acts 13 shows us.

3. RESTORATION: Sent for Transformation (Acts 13:1-3)

A. The Antioch Model: A Missional Hub (v. 1):

A diverse church: Prophets and teachers, from different backgrounds. This shows a healthy church that isn't inward-focused. We R2B a missional hub!

Worship and Fasting: Their outward mission flowed from their inward devotion. This isn't just activity; it's Spirit-led action.

B. The Holy Spirit's Initiative (v. 2):

"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them": The Holy Spirit *initiates* the sending. It's not a human strategy session, but divine direction.

God's Call: The mission isn't just *what* we do, but *where* and *to whom* the Spirit sends.

C. The Church's Participation (v. 3):

Fasting, Praying, Laying on Hands, Sending: The church affirms and releases the missionaries. They are co-laborers.

Connecting to Restoration:

- **Restoration of Individuals:** As people are rescued and redeemed, they begin the process of being restored to God's original design – wholeness, purpose, relationship with Him.
- **Restoration of Creation/Communities:** The mission of God ultimately aims for the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21, Revelation 21:1-5).

As people are transformed, communities begin to be transformed. Missionaries are sent to share the Good News and facilitate His restoration.

D. Our Role in Restoration:

We participate by going, sending, praying, and supporting those who are bringing the light of the Gospel into broken places, leading to personal and communal restoration.

Conclusion: Living the 3 R2B

Rescue: Jesus commands us to go and join Him in bring people out of spiritual peril.

Redemption: The Holy Spirit empowers us for this purpose, reminding us of the freedom Christ purchased.

Restoration: The ultimate goal of bringing people and communities back to God's intended design, initiated and sustained by the Holy Spirit through the church.

Call to Action. Personal Reflection:

Where are you in this "missional R2B"?

Are you aware of the urgency of rescue?

Are you relying on the Spirit's power for redemption?

Are you actively participating in God's work of restoration, whether in your Jerusalem or to the ends of the earth?

Practical Steps:

Pray for specific people who need rescue.

Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to be a witness this week.

Consider how you can support global missions (giving, praying, going).

Commit to living as a "missional people" in every sphere of your life.