A Mission Worth Living For

Bible Study Guide
Scripture: Luke 4:17-21
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Opening Prayer & Welcome

Begin with prayer asking God to write His mission clearly on our hearts and empower us by His Spirit to live as sent people

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Introduction: From Wilderness Victory to Mission Declaration

Key Definition: Our mission is a Spirit-empowered, gospel-centered calling to bring good news to the broken, freedom to the captive, and restoration to the oppressed—meeting people where they are with the love of Christ.

Scripture Foundation: "And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. He opened the book and found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.' And he closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'" - Luke 4:17-21

Discussion Starter: Jesus' Strategic Ministry Launch

After Jesus defeated the devil in the wilderness where Israel had failed, He walked into the synagogue—the place where all the rabbis, scribes, and Pharisees gathered to discuss God's law. Jesus took the scroll of Isaiah and deliberately chose this passage to declare His mission. **This wasn't random—this was strategic.**

The Context: Jesus had just been baptized (God declared "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"), led by the Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days of temptation, and emerged victorious. Now He publicly declares what His ministry will accomplish.

Questions:

1. Why was it significant that Jesus chose this specific passage from Isaiah?
2. What does it mean that Jesus said "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"?

3. How should Jesus' mission declaration shape our understanding of what the church should be doing?

The Big Idea

We are disciples of Christ called to live out Jesus' Spirit-empowered mission of bringing good news, freedom, and restoration to broken people

Everything we do must make us look like Jesus and function like Jesus

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Reality #1: The Mission Begins with Spirit Empowerment

Key Scripture: Luke 4:18

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor..."

Main Points:

- We cannot do anything for God without the power of God's Spirit
- The mission is empowered by the Spirit, not by our personality, ability, or strategy
- All those things are needed and necessary, but they shouldn't supersede the Spirit's power
- Without the Spirit's power, mission is simply emotion and events

Key Teaching:

"The mission begins with spirit empowerment. When we are led and empowered by the Spirit, it takes away our thinking that it's about my personality, that it's about my ability, that it's about my skill or strategy. All you're concerned about then is being led and empowered by God's spirit."

"Ministry without the spirit is like a house without electricity. It has form, but no light."

"Without the spirit, we are just going through emotions. We're just putting together events. The mission must lead to a movement, or it's just simply emotion."

Supporting Scripture: Ephesians 1:18-21

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of his might which he brought about in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above

all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come."

Practical Illustration: The Car Running on Fumes

"Some of us are operating on fumes. You know what that's like when you're driving your car and that gas light came on a long time ago, and you still driving? You passed by gas stations and failed to stop and get gas when you needed it. Now all you're doing is running off fumes, and it's clogging up the fuel lines, right? That car is not able to drive and operate the way it needs to. But the same is true for the child of God when we don't operate with God's Spirit—you're operating without power, without what's needed to keep you going, operating on self-effort and human strength. And each time we do that family, we fail."

Discussion Questions:

1. How can you tell if you're operating in ministry through the Spirit versus through self-effort?
2. What does it mean that the Spirit "empowers" our mission work?
3. Why does Bro. Hall say ministry without the Spirit is like a house without electricity?
4. What changes when we stop relying on our own abilities and start depending on the Spirit?

Truth Bomb:

The mission is empowered by the Spirit, not by our personality, ability, or strategy.

Application:

If you're going to steward and lead a ministry, you've got to make sure your life is being led and governed by the Spirit of God. Otherwise, you're going to have a hard time influencing people for good instead of being someone that brings people in—you'll end up being a repellent.

Reality #2: The Mission Delivers Good News to the Broken

Key Scripture: Luke 4:18

"He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted..."

Main Points:

- Our mission is gospel-centered and addresses spiritual poverty and emotional wounds
- Jesus wasn't talking about materially poor people—He's talking about those poor in spirit

- Our ministry must be safe harbors for the hurting, spiritually sick, and satanically broken
- Don't assume someone is okay just because they're smiling

Key Teaching:

"Our mission is a gospel-centered mission that addresses spiritual poverty and emotional wounds. Do not take for granted just because a person comes in here and they're smiling that they are already whole."

"Our measurement of impact will not be by attendance primarily, but by hearts healed and the lives that are transformed."

"We don't know how to see people. We don't know how to save people. We don't know how to love people. We say anything that comes to mind, we treat them all kinds of ways. And then we think that our guests who come to visit don't see that."

The Quantity vs. Quality Teaching:

"I used to do that when I first got here. I used to always count as I came into the building... I used to keep the little attendance book right back there, and I would look in the attendance book to see how many people came to worship. I didn't do it faithfully until COVID hit. And then when we had to shut the doors from COVID, God had to check himself—the numbers didn't look quite the same. You know what God was trying to show me? 'Fred, it ain't about numbers. How about you start looking for quality?'

You can see all you look for is quantity—how many people show up—and those people won't always show up. But if you start developing quality disciples, quality disciples will show up when nobody else wants to. Quality disciples will serve when nobody else wants to serve."

Supporting Scripture: 1 John 2:1-2

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for those of the whole world."

Discussion Questions:

1. What's the difference between material poverty and spiritual poverty?
2. How can we better recognize when someone is spiritually broken?
3. Why should our measurement be hearts healed rather than attendance numbers?
4. What does it mean for the church to be a "safe harbor" for hurting people?

Truth Bomb:

Our measurement of impact will not be by attendance primarily, but by hearts healed and lives transformed.

Application:

When people are really hurting, they know when you are really genuine. The mission and ministry meets people where they are. Our mission and ministry must become passionate and practical. We must be people who, when we start hearing people talk and you hear broken talk, you've got to be ready and say, "You know what? I got someone" or "I got somebody who can help you with that."

Reality #3: The Mission Brings Freedom and Vision

Key Scripture: Luke 4:18-19

"He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed..."

Main Points:

- Our mission gives hope to people because if they can see that God did it for us, then God can do it for them
- We're called to help people bound by sin and circumstances
- Freedom and vision are central to discipleship
- We're not giving license to live however we want—we're offering liberty to live for God

Key Teaching:

"You can't see when you're spiritually blind. You don't know which direction you're going. You don't know how you should live. You don't know how you should function. You can't do that when you're living spiritually blind."

"Everything we do, how we live, the mission, the ministries we carry out, must give sight to the blind by giving people the good news and then living out such good news."

"We cannot claim to be on Christ's mission if we ignore oppression, burdens, and brokenness in our community. How dare we come here every Sunday in the city, in the neighborhood of Liberty City—and if that ain't a God thing, if that ain't a coincidence that this church is called Liberty City. That's a God thing that the church is called Liberty—a city that gives liberty."

The Liberty City Connection:

"Every day you come in here, every Sunday rather, you come in here, you're coming to a place of liberation. You're coming to a place that should free you, that should release you. So listen, I encourage you to do just that—release it. Stop holding on to stuff. Stop bringing stuff with you."

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to give "sight to the spiritually blind"?
2. How can our lives demonstrate the freedom that Jesus offers?
3. What injustices in our community should the church address?
4. How is the name "Liberty City" significant for our church's mission?

Truth Bomb:

Freedom and vision are central to discipleship—not liberty to live how we want, but liberty to live for God.

Application:

We've got to have spiritual urgency. When you start hearing people talk and you hear broken talk, you've got to be ready to say, "You know what? I got someone" or "I got somebody who can help you." You've got to see when somebody is hurt that you don't just say, "Well, pray for me, and I'll pray for you. Call me if you need me"—which really means "don't call me."

Reality #4: The Mission Proclaims God's Favorable Time

Key Scripture: Luke 4:19

"...and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

Main Points:

- Our mission is to proclaim God's grace—the year of Jubilee
- All our preaching and ministry purpose is for release, restoration, and renewal
- God's timing of grace is right now for those who are lost and need to be restored
- We must move with urgency and be people of restoration

Key Teaching:

"Our mission points people to God's timing of grace. In other words, for those that are lost and need to be restored, that grace period is right now. God has given us a period of grace, a time for grace, and it's right now. We must be of the same spirit, same focus, and have the same urgency."

"We got to be a people of restoration, a people that brings hope to broken lives, a people that says, 'You know what? I may not have all the answers, but I know somebody who can heal your hurt.'"

The Personal Assignment Challenge:

"This is not a church assignment, but every believer's assignment. Live as a sent person asking, 'Where is God sending me today?' And watch this—to whom are you sending me? Because here's the reality: to answer that question, God may not send you to whom you intended to go to. It may be someone that you don't necessarily like. I'll do you one better: God has a way, when it comes to him getting glory and saving people, God has a way of using us to go right back to our very enemies."

The Paul Example:

"Ask the Apostle Paul. Paul had to go right back to the very people he hated—Gentiles. He had to go preach the gospel to folks that he did not want in his circle. So God will sometimes use us to go right back to the very people who we were once enemies with. God may even use you to go back to the people you used to run with who still ain't saved, still ain't right."

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean that we're living in God's "favorable year"?
2. How should knowing this is the time of grace create urgency in our mission?
3. Who might God be sending you to that you wouldn't naturally choose?
4. What does it mean to be "people of restoration"?

Truth Bomb:

We must be people of restoration who bring hope to broken lives.

Application:

Live as a sent person asking, "Where is God sending me today? And to whom are you sending me?" Don't look for where God is taking you—when God reveals where you're going, actively, purposefully, and intentionally move in that direction.

Practical Application: Taking Inventory

Self-Examination Questions:

1. **Are you operating in the Spirit's power or your own abilities?**
    - Do you rely on your personality, skills, and strategies more than God's Spirit?
    - How can you tell when you're running on spiritual "fumes"?
2. **Are you meeting people where they are with the gospel?**
    - Do you see church as a place for the already-whole or a hospital for the broken?
    - How do you respond when someone shares their hurt with you?

3. **Are you living as a sent person?**
    - Who is God sending you to with the gospel message?
    - Are you willing to go to people you don't naturally like or former enemies?

The Ministry Involvement Challenge:

"If you signed up for ministry, don't treat sign-up sheets like the newspaper—some people love them both, they just collect both and put them in a drawer for the look of it. Don't sign up for ministry just because. Sign up for doing something you love and really maximize the talent and abilities God has given you."

Key Principle: As a steward leader, you don't own the ministry—you simply manage God's resources, and that includes people.

Group Prayer & Commitment

Prayer Focus Areas:

1. **Spirit Empowerment:** Ask God to fill you with His Spirit's power for ministry
2. **Gospel Heart:** Pray for compassion toward the spiritually broken and lost
3. **Freedom:** Request boldness to address injustice and oppression in our community
4. **Urgency:** Pray for hearts that move quickly to help hurting people

Commitment Challenge:

This week, identify someone in your life who needs the good news of Jesus and ask God how He wants to use you to bring hope to their brokenness.

Reflection: "Ministry without the Spirit is like a house without electricity. It has form, but no light."

For Further Study

Additional Scriptures:

- Isaiah 61:1-3 (The original prophecy Jesus read)
- Matthew 28:19-20 (The Great Commission connection)
- Ephesians 1:18-21 (Prayer for spiritual empowerment)
- 1 John 2:1-2 (Our advocate with the Father)

Discussion for Next Week:
How can we as a church better function as "safe harbors for the hurting, spiritually sick, and satanically broken"?

Closing Prayer

Pray for genuine Spirit empowerment in all ministry efforts. Ask God to help us see people the way Jesus sees them and to meet them where they are with authentic love and practical help. Request wisdom to live as sent people who actively look for opportunities to bring good news, freedom, and restoration to broken lives. Pray for Liberty City Church to truly be a place of liberation for all who enter.

Remember: "When God speaks, things begin to shift"—that's our theme for the Gospel Campaign. If you need prayer, if you want God to move in your life, then let's have a conversation with God.