Pillar #4: Mission, life WITH the Spirit

MPS: God saves through Jesus to send Christ-followers with His Spirit to impact the world with the gospel.
OBJ: Everyone can understand Mission by four defining marks on every Christ-follower’s life.

INTRO Jesus promised, “I will Build my church.” We are studying how Jesus builds His church. Paul teaches that the church is “a pillar and buttress of the truth.” The living expression of God’s people serves as a pillar of His truth in the world. Pillars transfer the stability of the foundation upward to create inhabitable space. The mission of LifePoint Church through the ongoing teaching and ministries, raise the foundational gospel truths of Jesus Christ so people can connect, grow and mature with God.

TRANS Today we consider how life with God (Relationship) In Christ Jesus (Authenticity) to live BY the Spirit (Expression) culminates to life WITH the Spirit (Mission). Mission is our 4th Pillar because when God saves, He sends us WITH His Spirit in the world. Life WITH the Spirit means that a Christian lives as a faithful witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ at all times and all place among people to bring the light and hope of Jesus to people where darkness and deception remain.

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The Scripture clearly set forth mission as not only what God is doing in the world, an expression of His nature and character, but that to which He calls His people. Mission as a core value is how the church makes Jesus known in the world as we work with Holy Spirit to transfer the glory of truth through gospel, in which we are being renewed daily, to a world that remains enslaved in the kingdom of darkness for reconciliation with God.

OBJ Using Scriptures record of the Great Commission, I want to identify four defining marks of mission for the church.

1. Mission means we are marked with authority to make disciples.

READ Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20

Matthew’s record of the Great Commission is best known. He begins by Jesus bestowing authority on His followers. The work of the Great Commission is spiritual in nature and requires spiritual engagement. Christians cannot accomplish what we are commanded to do without Jesus’ authority. Contrary to much of what we often see today, Christianity is not about conforming people to a set of rules or cultural fads. Making disciples engages the heart and mind to repent and believe, re-think and redeem. Disciples are not made by adherence but by repentance through faith to transformation. Disciple-making is distinctively spiritual in nature. Jesus gives His authority for the spiritual work of disciple-making.

Jesus also gives His authority to determine the realm of the work. Isaiah says, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation”. (Isa 52:7) If the Gospel is “good news” then why are feet identified as beautiful and not the mouth? Mission makes feet beautiful because feet follow the route where authority establishes its reigns.

ILLUS WWII Iwo Jima flag raising. [pic] The infamous picture of World War II is of American serviceman raising the flag on Iwo Jima after the battle to calm the island. They got there because they won the battle to grant them authority to go there.

ILLUS US Govt website for International travel. The US government keeps a website to inform international travelers of the level of US authority present in each country and region of the world. This protects US citizens as they travel abroad.
The Great Commission begins “Go, therefore,”. No matter where we go, but everywhere that we do go, Christians have Jesus authority to make disciples. Making disciples is not an activity limited to only one or a few locations. Jesus is Lord over all creation who gives His authority to Christians to make disciples everywhere they go, at all times and among all people by His authority.

Jesus gives “all” authority for disciple-making. From the first preaching of the Gospel, Gen 3.15, God declared that sin would be crushed by the heel of the Savior. God will put everything under Jesus’ feet. Psa 8.6; Heb 2.8 There is nothing we can or ever will face in making disciples that is not under Jesus’ authority. Think about this. This doesn’t mean we won’t face hard and challenging circumstances, situations or opposition. It does mean that no matter what we do face in making disciples, it is under Jesus’ authority. Jesus gives all authority to accomplish the Great Commission because no matter where we are or who we are with, and no matter what we come against, Jesus is still Lord. And THAT matters first and most in making disciples.

Making disciples means testifying to the supremacy of Jesus in all of life. When we testify of Jesus, He speaks to the issues of life that often go unaddressed, where life is hard, where painful experiences have altered people’s lives and they remain under that hurt. The gospel that makes disciples doesn’t ignore that past, but deals with it to heal, restore, make a way to move forward and live again because it breaks chains that bind and heals wounds that condemn. Disciple-making is distinctively the work of heart change, when by faith we repent and believe in Jesus, and God gives us a new heart. Disciple-making occurs not because of who we are as Christians, but because of WHOSE we are as we go in His authority.

APPL Christ-follower, Settle this deeply in your heart. Jesus gave you His authority to make disciples. Wherever you go, whomever you are with, whatever you are doing or discuss, whatever may happen, He is Lord! Make disciples!

TRANS You may ask, “how do I make disciples?” The second defining mark of mission answers this for us.

READ Mark 16:15-16

And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

16Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-16

2. Mission means we are marked with good news of salvation

Throughout His gospel, Mark demonstrates Jesus’ power against the backdrop of worldly power. Our hindsight gives the advantage to see the truth of what He was saying. The dominant strength of the Roman Empire didn’t make it. But Jesus’ power is like none other. When the kingdoms of this world crumble, Jesus stands supreme and secure.

Mark focuses on the supreme power of the gospel in his record of the Great Commission. This is evidenced by phrases such as “the whole creation” as our domain and “Whoever” as our aim for ministry. He demonstrates repeatedly in his gospel account to illustrate what Paul states in Romans 1:16, “For… the gospel…is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” Rom 1:16b The gospel is the good news of God’s power to save. According to Mark, our commission stands in proportion to the gospel’s power, without limit.

The Gospel’s power forms both our charge and challenge. The gospel charges us to hold forth that there is hope for all who believe to be saved. No one is too far from God for His power to reach them and save. Christians hold the distinct conviction that the gospel can change anyone, NOT because of them nor because of our doing, but because of Jesus.

ILLUS Sometimes when we’ve tried everything to help a person with no success, we can be tempted to give up, to lose hope, to believe that they are hopeless because nothing could change them. But this is the very moment Mark speaks to when He says “proclaim the gospel to the whole creation”. IF Jesus’ has been faithful for one, then we know His power does changes hearts and lives. TRANS And this is the point where the charge from the gospel becomes our challenge.

The gospel also challenges us in the places where our belief falters. The gospel always confronts our own hearts in the process of disciple-making when we try to place parameters on Jesus for how He must work, for what we want Him to do or
when He needs to get it done. Seldom does God work in our timeframe, in our way or in ways that we fully comprehend. His ways are not ours to command. And at this moment when the gospel challenges our own belief we must remember, His commands are ours to obey. When things are hard, really hard, and we don’t understand, Jesus is still Lord and the gospel is still good news of salvation.

Mark reminds us that our mission is good news of salvation. Good news of salvation needs to be shared and celebrated among those who are being saved because we need the encouragement and strength it provides. And good news of salvation must also be proclaimed in every place where it has not yet been heard or believed. For those who are being saved it is the power of God for life. For those who are perishing it is the hope of salvation. The charge of the Great Commission is that we “go” to those who have not heard and again to those who have refused to listen to share the gospel as God’s good news of salvation.

TRANS But the gospel does not stop only at one situation. Luke’s record presses our vision for the gospel much farther.

3. Mission means we are marked with divine power to reach the whole world.

READ Luke 24:46-48

and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. Luke 24:46-48

READ Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

Luke’s record expands our focus to an unlimited scope of gospel proclamation. Whereas Matthew’s record authorizes us to do what we cannot do, Luke’s defining mark empowers us to accomplish what is impossible without God’s power.

Jesus suffered in our place and He died our death. We need not suffer sin’s ravaging ills, fall prey to Satan’s deceiving schemes nor succumb to the grave’s always terminal end and Hell’s eternal torment. The power of the gospel is far and incomparably greater than our adversary and all his foes. Jesus forgives sin when one repents and believes in Him. 1John1.9

Luke, the great Doctor, declares spiritual healing to the one suffering from sin and spiritual darkness. He doesn’t show the sick searching for a healer. Rather, He proclaims the Healer who pursues the lost to forgive and heal from sin. There is no crisis of healthcare in Heaven! The cost has been paid and there is room for any who will come. We know, Christian, because we’ve been forgiven by the hand of the Healer and we are His witnesses.

God’s divine power confronts Satan’s dark deceit and sin’s destruction by the Christian’s faithful witness. Christians are first-hand witnesses to Jesus’ saving power. As He leads we bear His witness in every place we go, even to the ends of the earth. The prophet Isaiah says. “I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” (Isa 49.6b) The gospel is not dependent on our creativity but casts our vision for us. We are witnesses to God’s power in the gospel to save from sin.

The Christian witness carries God’s power to save to the ends of the earth. The faithful witness of a Christian spreads God’s divine presence over all the earth, to every nation. How? Our witness begins at home, right where you are.

ILLUS LifePoint has a team in France right now spreading the witness of Jesus to the nations. In two weeks, we will license a man to chaplaincy and commission a couple to serve the nations in South America. We’ve worked in six nations across the globe and work with partners in at least another six across the globe. You may not have thought of this, but Luke presses us to remember God’s divine power to reach the whole world. The extent of our witness among the nations, LifePoint, will always be directly dependent on the strength of our witness right here at home.
When Jesus commissioned us as his witnesses, He didn’t leave us to figure it out. He commissions us to make disciples right where we are, everywhere we go and with all whom we are among. He leads us from where we are to where He wills us to spread His witness across the whole earth. This is the defining mark of mission Luke teaches us. People all around you need to hear your witness every day of God’s power to save. God will use your witness to reach the whole world. Neighbor to nation, Christians bear witness to God’s power through the gospel to save and set free from sin.

TRANS Finally, we have John’s and Paul’s record of the Great Commission.

4. Mission means we are marked with commissioned and entrusted to do God’s work.

READ John 20.21

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. John 20:21

READ 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:18–20

John and Paul both emphasize our commission from Jesus in the Great Commission. Commission means we live under an authoritative order. As we have already seen from Matthew and Luke, Jesus set all His authority on us to go do the gospel work that Mark reminds us is so powerful. This is not an “add-on” but the all-consuming purpose of our life. God’s commission on the life of every Christian defines our purpose in this world.

Paul explains God’s commission that is on us. (Be careful not to overlook the importance of this defining marker for our lives.) Jesus saves people through His work that He has entrusted us to do. Jesus knew why God sent Him, to do the Father’s work.

John 5:19-20 He sends Christians to do the same, and greater works too! Hear His words READ John 14:12–14.

“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. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. John 14:12-14

Look around, Christian, every day. Where you are is where God has commissioned you. And in that place, among those people He has entrusted you with the power of His good news of hope and salvation for all who will believe. Christians are entrusted with the gospel to declare the gospel and labor for reconciliation between God and people.

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CLOSE Mission’s four defining marks means God uses every Christian to impact people’s lives for eternity with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are created and redeemed, renewed and reconciled for the great and glorious work of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

These four core values – Relationship, Authenticity, Expression and Mission – define us. LifePoint, from our identity of personhood to our purpose in daily labors. And by these values we raise the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ to create “space that is relational and inhabitable so others can believe and come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.”

Jesus is building His Church, and that includes LifePoint. Let us give ourselves evermore to His great gospel work as we Pray – Invest – Engage!