

Reaching Up – Reaching Out – Reaching In

- What is the mission of the church?
- Church growth experts tell us that every church should have a well-defined statement that delineates the vision, purpose, mission and strategy of the church
- The danger with these types of statements is that they become little more than slogans
- The mission of the church needs to be understood by every member of the church
- What is the church? Why should I be a member of a local church? What is the church here for?
- There are as many “mission statements” as there are churches
- But every statement should include the basic biblical understanding of what the church is and what the church does
- Today we focus on a simple statement about the mission of the church
- Three things: 1) Reaching Up; 2) Reaching Out; 3) Reaching In

I. REACHING UP IN WORSHIP

1. Do not misunderstand!
2. We are not talking about trying to reach God – or get to God
3. God has already gotten to us – Christmas – Incarnation - Immanuel
4. *Reaching Up* signifies our response to God in worship
5. Worship is meant to be an act of love – an expression of our love for God – a response to God
6. After salvation, worship is the most important thing we do – it is foundational
 - a. Real worship is God-centered (Rev 4:1-11)
 - b. Real worship must be “*in spirit and in truth*” (Jn 4:23-24)
 - c. Real worship never responds by saying – “I didn’t get anything out of worship today”
 - d. The moment we focus on “I” we have missed the point of worship
 - e. Worship is not about “YOU” – it’s about GOD
 - f. The question is not what you “get out of worship” – but what God gets out of your worship

- g. You are not spectators or an audience
 - h. Worship is made up of an audience of *ONE - God*
7. Everything else flows out of worship
 - a. Isaiah 6 – “*Here am I, send me*”
 - b. The church at Antioch was in worship when the HS set apart Barnabas and Saul for the first missionary effort (Acts 13:2)

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
 - c. When we truly worship Him in “spirit and in truth” – when we “*Reach Up in Worship*” - God speaks to us

II. REACHING OUT IN EVANGELISM

1. Notice that people respond when they experience real worship - Send ME!
2. Being *with* God – experiencing God - is the greatest motivator for personal evangelism
3. According to Mark’s gospel, Jesus didn’t call the Twelve disciples just so they could be *with* Him
4. He called them *to send them out*
5. Mark 3:14 (NKJV)

“He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach”
6. Being *with* God is great – but it is not all there is
 - a. The Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31)
 - 1) Jesus was once asked by an expert in the Law of Moses to identify the greatest commandment of all
 - 2) Jesus responded by quoting the *shema* (Mark 12:30-31 – ESV)

³⁰ *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’*
 - 3) Jesus went on to say that the second greatest commandment was loving your neighbor (Mark 12:31 - ESV)

³¹ *The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.*

- 4) Love for God and love neighbor go together (1 Jn 4:20-21 – ESV)

²⁰ *If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.* ²¹ *And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

- b. The Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20 ESV)

¹⁸ *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."*

- 1) Love God – Love People
- 2) The greatest way to express your love to people is to tell them about Jesus

TRANSITION: Reaching Up – Reaching Out -

III. REACHING IN THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP

1. Discipleship has to do with spiritual growth
2. The Bible assumes that growth will be a part of the life of every true believer
3. Jesus taught that we are to - 1. Evangelize – 2. Baptize – and – 3. Teach
4. Discipleship has to do with doing things Jesus would do and becoming like Him in the process
5. Discipleship is a process – **NOT A PROGRAM** – a process – a lifelong process
 - a. Spiritual maturity doesn't happen overnight or automatically
 - b. Discipleship takes time
 - 1) Mark 3:14 (quoted earlier) says that Jesus *"appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out"*
 - 2) Jesus trained the apostles by being "with them" before He "sent them out" (Mark 6:7)
 - 3) Jesus spent three years working on the original 12!

- 4) Paul – not one of the original 12 – but one of the greatest disciples – spoke of his own journey into discipleship in **Philippians 3:2-17**

- 5) The process of discipleship never ends in this life – we never "graduate" – we never "complete the course"

- 6) Romans 12:1-2 (ESV) –

¹ *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*
² *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, - what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

- 7) The goal of discipleship is transformation into the image of Christ

CONCLUSION:

1. What is the mission of the church?
2. If someone asked you "What is the purpose of Oak Hill BC – how would you answer?"
3. I can't think of a better answer than worship – evangelism – discipleship
4. But our response must be more than mere words – it needs to become real for us and lived out in our lives
 - a. If we are going to tell people about worship – we must be worshippers
 - b. If we are going to evangelize – we must have the evangel
 - c. If we are going to disciple others – we must be discipled ourselves
5. Let people know that we who make up the body of Christ known as Oak Hill BC of Poplarville are focused on –
 - Reaching Up to God in true, spiritual worship
 - Reaching Out to evangelize and share how people can have a personal relationship with God through Jesus
 - Reaching In to disciple and help every believer be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ