

Review last week.

- God-exalting worship is the church's ultimate purpose because it is God's ultimate purpose for missions.
- Why must we have God as the center and his worship as the goal of missions? Otherwise, the goal of missions becomes man-centered.
- Enjoying God's glory is God's greatest gift of love and joy to man because there is nothing more worthy, supreme, weighty, valuable, or blissful in heaven or earth!
- Christ died for sinners so that God may be glorified for his mercy.
- God's ultimate passion and purpose in missions is worship. May his passion be ours.

Turn Numbers 14.¹ God delivered Israel out of the land of Egypt and gave them his law at Mount Saini. As he is leading them toward the Promised Land, the people grumble and rebel against the Lord: *"⁴Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."* God responds to this betrayal, saying he *"¹²will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."*

Moses, however, prefigures Christ and intercedes on their behalf. Like all the great prayers of the Bible, he appeals to the greatness of God's steadfast love and commitment to his glory: *"¹⁵Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, ¹⁶'It is because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.'" God answers Moses' prayer and gives us a clear purpose statement concerning his mission on earth:*

²⁰Then the Lord said, "I have pardoned, according to your word. ²¹ But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, ²² none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice (Num. 14:19-21).

¹ This material closely (but not completely) resembles CHBC's Core Seminar. Please acknowledge their work as you begin the class.

The mission of God is to fill the earth with his glory. The church's mission is grounded in *God's redemptive mission throughout history*, from Creation to Consummation. We must first trace the theme of God's mission to fill the earth with his glory throughout the storyline of all Scripture to understand what the Bible teaches about the church's mission. Lord willing, you will better understand the basis for missions by understanding the storyline of Scripture.

1st. The King and His Kingdom.

God is, in all respects, the eternal, immutable, self-existing first cause of the universe. So, Genesis 1 opens by depicting God as the Creator and Sustainer of everyone and everything, with no one and nothing to oppose him. He is the transcendent, uncreated God who creates the heavens and the earth with his living and active Word.

Theologians typically divide God's work of creation in Genesis 1 into two categories: "forming" and "filling." In the first three days, God forms light (v. 3), the sky (v. 6), and the land, seas, and vegetation (v. 9, 11). On days four through six, God orders and fills the newly formed heavens and the earth with created things: the sun, moon, and stars (v. 14), the birds and fish (v. 20), and animals (v. 24).

Finally, God makes man in his image as the climax and crown of his creation (v. 26). Image bearing defines what it means to be human as they are made to relate to God, represent His image, and rule his creation. God's creation manifests his glory, but image bearers uniquely display his moral character and benevolent rule because *God relates to them personally*.

God both *forms* and *fills* each day with created things. However, after God forms man from the dust, breathes life into him, and forms his equal counterpart, God commissions man to

do the rest of the *filling*. Look at Genesis 2:7: *then the Lord God **formed** the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;* and Genesis 1:28: *“And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and **fill** the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

Instead of creating a multitude of human beings at once, God created a single Adam and a single Eve. He tasks *them* to fill the earth with his image bearers and expand the borders of Eden. God would fill the earth with his glory by making the entire earth a temple filled with *worshiping image bearers!*

Ask: Why does beginning with the doctrine of creation matter for missions? (God is the only God; the Creator of everyone; humans are created to worship him).

Sadly, this glorious vision did not happen. We do not live in a perfect Eden, with everyone perfectly reflecting the glory of God. Something has gone terribly wrong. So, we move to Scene II...

2nd. **The Fall: Rebellion Against the King.**

Satan, a fallen angel who hates God, opposes the glory of God with every fiber of his being. He deliberately deceives humanity into a rebellion against God to thwart God’s plan for his good creation. In Genesis 3, he seduces Adam and Eve to seize godlike power for themselves. They commit treason, claiming equality with God and even attempting to rule or judge him. They want to determine and redefine what is “good” for themselves and rule the earth on their terms rather than God’s. *Sadly, after the Fall, they image Satan more than they image*

God. By Gen. 6, they **fill** the earth with violence and rebellion: “*The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*” (Gen 6:5).

First, humanity broke its relationship with God. God expels them from the Garden, and instead of living in loving fellowship with him, man futilely competes against God for the rule of the earth. **Second, they broke their perfect relationship with each other.** They must now deal with interpersonal conflict and evil. **Third, humanity broke itself.** Because of sin, the image of God was marred, and, in a sense, we became less fully human. **Finally, they broke a perfect relationship with the creative order.** God curses creation itself because of man’s sin (Gen. 3:17-18).

Ask: What does the Fall tell us about our ability to fulfill our mission? (We can’t do it. Humankind cannot advance paradise on earth. We need a second Adam, the perfect image of God, to heal our corruption)

How would a God fulfill his plan now?

3rd. **The King Redeems His People**. We will explore redemption under three subheadings: Redemption Anticipated, Redemption Accomplished, and Redemption Applied.

Redemption is Anticipated in the Old Testament. Adam heard the threat of death in Genesis 2:16, but the promise of life in Genesis 3:15: “*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.*” This promise sets the trajectory for the Bible’s storyline. The rest of the Bible

traces this promised “*offspring*” who will crush Satan, restore humankind, and bring God’s kingdom on earth.

The promise of Genesis 3:15 comes into sharper focus in Genesis 12:1-3:

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And **I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**

Up until Genesis 12, there are five curses recorded: **First**, God cursed the serpent (3:14). **Second**, God cursed the ground (3:17). **Third**, Cain was cursed (4:11). **Fourth**, Lamech refers to the cursed ground (5:29). **And fifth**, Noah cursed Canaan (9:25). **God makes five promises to Abraham to signal that he will reverse his curses.** God formed Adam and Eve, blessed them, and commissioned them to *fill* the earth. **God will now form a new people through Abraham, who will bring God’s blessing to the whole earth.**

God repeats this promise to Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. Eventually, in 2 Sam. 7:12-16, God promises King David that this prophesied offspring will come from his line and will reign *forever*:

¹² **When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.** ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ **I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.** When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

Psalms 45:17 states, “*I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore, nations will praise you forever and ever.*” **This coming Messianic king is the one who will bring**

the blessing of the nations! God promises to fill the earth with his glory by sending a promised royal son who will bless the nations.

Redemption is Accomplished through Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Matthew's Gospel begins with a genealogy because Jesus is the promised of the Seed of the Woman, the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises!

Jesus is God the Son incarnate. One man, Adam, turned all men against God. So, God became a man to bring all men back to God. God so loved the world He sent his son Jesus to become a man. Still truly God, but also truly man, he lived a perfect and holy life for the glory of God. He obeyed God's laws perfectly and lived the life we failed to live. In love, He gave up his perfect life as a substitutionary sacrifice. He triumphed over death, being raised from the dead because his sacrifice paid the full penalty for our sins and pleased God. Jesus ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of God. He made a way for Fallen man to be restored to the holy God. Jesus' death satisfies God's righteous wrath and grants God's saving righteousness to those who repent and believe.

Redemption is Applied now until Christ returns. He will return soon to judge the living and the dead at the Final Judgement. But now, he mercifully offers the forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all and any who come to him. So that the world may hear this good news and that his glory may be known among the nations, Jesus commissions his church to proclaim this redemption in all the earth. Matthew 28:18-20:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

God’s people fill the earth with God’s glory by going to the nations, proclaiming the gospel, and baptizing believers into local churches who teach disciples to obey everything Christ has commanded. **The Great Commission is the mission of the church. We fill the earth with God’s glory by making disciples of all nations.**

Have you ever seen a picture of the earth from space at night? The clusters of light show the presence of cities. One day, God will plant churches of light on a dark planet that fills the whole earth with its light. The globe will be covered with these embassies of light (churches) worldwide as a foretaste of when the entire earth will be filled with his glory.

In the book of Acts, Luke purposefully uses creation language to describe the spread of the Word and the growth of the church: “*The word of God continued to **increase**, and the number of the disciples **multiplied** greatly in Jerusalem*” (Acts 6:7). “*But the word of God **increased** and **multiplied**.*” (Acts 12:24). The Greek words “*increase*” and “*multiply*” are equivalent to the Hebrew words “*be fruitful and multiply*.” By the power of the Holy Spirit, the church will bring the gospel to the ends of the earth!

Ask: How does obeying the Great Commission fill the earth with God’s glory? (By Christ’s power, we fill the earth with worshipers by planting local churches)

And that brings us to the final part of the story.

4th. **The Return of the King.**

Paul Washer said, “We live between two great days: The day Christ hung before men, and the day all will kneel before Christ.” Jesus will return, and on that day, his kingdom will fully and finally come on earth as it is in heaven.

Isaiah 11:6-9 prophecies about that Day:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*

The glory of God will perfectly fill the earth at the consummation of all things.

Conclusion. What should we learn from this?

First, God’s mission shapes ours. Are you living for the purpose for which God made you? Have you ever asked God if you are called to go to another nation?

Second, we know that God’s mission will not fail. God has promised its success and has empowered it with his Spirit. Victory is certain.

Third, we should define what we mean by missions and missionaries now: In simplest terms, the mission of the church is the Great Commission. More specifically, ***Missions*** is the specific Great Commission work of ***church planting and strengthening*** across ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and/or geographic boundaries by an authorized ambassador ***set apart and sent out*** under the authority of a local church so that every tribe, tongue, nation, and language may worship the Lord and the earth may be filled with God’s glory.

Every Christian is involved in the Great Commission, but not every Christian is a missionary. A **missionary** is a qualified Christian ***set apart and sent*** out under the authority of a local church as an authorized ambassador to an area of recognized need, ordinarily crossing cultural contexts, to pursue the specific tasks of the Great Commission in planting and strengthening local indigenous churches (evangelism, Bible Translation, discipleship, leadership training, etc.).

We will unpack this further in future classes.