

“Mission! What Is It? What’s Ours?”

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Did any of you ever watch “*Mission: Impossible*” in the late 60’s early 70’s? If you did, you’ll remember this opening line each week, “*Your mission, should you choose to accept it*”, (then the voice would explain what the mission was), and the message would end with, “*As always, should you or any of your I.M. Force be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions. This tape will self-destruct in five seconds. Good luck!*”

I don’t know about you, but I’m really glad that when God gives us a Mission, He helps us and still remembers that we’re His! As Jesus gave His Great Commission, He was very direct as to what the Mission is.

Open to Matthew 28. Jesus had died and rose again and was giving His disciples final directions as to what He wanted them to do. Verses 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.”*”

As Jesus gave His command to them, He wanted to make sure the disciples knew exactly what He wanted them to do. **Jesus gave it in one word: Go!** With Jesus giving the command to go, He was telling the disciples and us, that we can’t just stay where we are! The Mission happens somewhere different from here! We have to leave this place to move out into the world!

God’s given us a special position as His children. **We Are Ambassadors!** Listen to 2 Corinthians 5:20, “*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*” Or as another translation puts it, “*So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!”*”

As ambassadors, we have to remember who we speak for and represent! **It’s Not Our Message but God’s!** We’re not doing this on our own, we’re doing it for Him and taking Him into the world around us! Anything we say are more than our words, they’re God’s!

Open to Ephesians 6. As we move into mission, and continually speak and live Mission, it needs 3 things. The first is **Prayer**. Look at Paul’s words in Verses 18-20, “*praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.*”

Or as another translation puts it, “*Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God’s mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God’s ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.*” We need to start anything with prayer, having our focus realizing God is the One Who’s in control!

The second is **Persistence!** As we share Jesus Christ with those around us, we can't give up or stop after just doing it once, we have to *"keep on, keeping on!"* We can't stop just because it didn't turn out the way we thought it would turn out. We have to be persistent! We need to seek God's Will and know that God has it all under control and will guide the whole process!

The third is **You!** As you've been called God's ambassador, being involved in Mission, isn't just a job for someone else, or someone you think is better qualified, the Mission is for you! You play a very important role in Mission! As the hymn says, *"If you cannot be a prophet, if you cannot preach like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus, you can say He died for all."* We're all in this together, each and every one of us!

Look with me at what we've adopted as our Mission and Vision statements printed in the bulletin. *"Our highest priority is proclaiming God's Good News of love and grace and serving according to His Will."* *"Proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, live and move forward in faith, and carry out God's mission everywhere."* There are 4 actions that each of us is called to do by God in Mission.

Proclaim. We've been given everything by God. He loves us. He sent His Only Son to suffer and die in our place and take our punishment. Whether people believe it or not, we have the opportunity to tell everyone what God has not only done for us but the entire world! We need to keep the enthusiasm we had at Easter when we proclaimed, *"Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!"* Each day in our smiles and actions, we need to tell all around us how God has changed our life!

Serve. Open to Galatians 5. As we began this morning, Jesus calls you and me to go. As we go, we need to put others first! We have to remember how Jesus served us as He gave Himself, and how we as His, need to serve others in love! Verses 13-14, *"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* Your Christian life is a life of service!

Share. Will being involved in Mission be easy? No, because the world and Satan are working against you! But listen to these words from 1 Peter 4:13, *"But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed."* As you go about Mission, you need to look beyond the now, and keep the focus on what is to come! Jesus came for all and heaven by faith is yours!

Carry It Out. This isn't only the last point in the sermon, but in many ways, is the most difficult! It's easy to sit here and listen to these words, but it's another thing to go out and do it! We're called to be active, carrying out the Mission in all we do!

The closing words from St. Francis of Assisi are a constant reminder to me and everyone. Take the message to heart, because Mission Proclaiming and Sharing the Good News from God's Word, but it's also showing it all the time in how you live! *"Wherever You Go, Preach Christ. And When Necessary, Use Words!"* Continually be in Word and Action in Mission!