

## “Mission! What Now?”

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“Once upon a time, some visitors took a tour of an oil refinery. The tour guide showed them all the intricacies of the refining process. The vast catalyst chambers, the pipes, the heating vats—everything that went into the refining of oil.

As the tour ended, one of the visitors asked the tour guide a simple question. “*Sir, you showed us everything except the shipping department. This size oil refinery processes a huge amount of petroleum, turning it into gasoline and lubricants. But you haven’t shown us where it’s all put into containers and shipped out to the world.*”

“*Well, you see,*” said the tour guide, “*we don’t have a shipping department. Everything that is produced in this refinery is used up as energy to keep the refinery going.*”

This story could also be talking about church! The church has to understand that what it does is for the world, not just to keep itself going! Too many programs that many churches run exist for no other purpose than to keep the church existing! The purpose of the church isn’t to sustain itself, but to give what it has away to the world!

Jesus didn’t tell us to stay and keep our focus inward, His commission was for us to go out into the world and make disciples out there! That’s why the sign on the driveway says, “*You are Now Entering the Mission Field*”, not “*You are Now Leaving the Mission Field!*”

It’s very true that as we come to church, we find comfort and a feeling of safety as we’re here, but even though God calls us into worship and receive the Body and Blood of His Son, He also tells us that this can’t be the end! He has other ideas and tasks for us!

A couple of weeks ago, we looked at our Mission and Vision Statements and talked about what Mission is, and last week we learned what Mission activities we have going in our District. But today, after all that, we need to ask ourselves the question, “*What Now? How can we move from where we are into the world around us!*” I think there are 4 things we need to be and do as we live our lives in Mission to the world!

**Be Filled.** Open to Colossians 3. The world around us is so bombarding us with an excess of information that it’s difficult to know what to pay attention to. It’s so easy to get so caught up in all of it, that we lose our true focus and that’s God’s Word! Verses 16-17, “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*”

But not only do we need to be filled with God’s Word as we go into the Mission Field, we also need to be filled with His Spirit! The Spirit gives us power to handle seeming impossible situations! The original disciples were faced with such a challenge at Pentecost, but look what happened as they were filled! As they were filled with the Spirit’s power, 3,000 came to faith!

**Be Open.** It’s so easy in a world that fights against us, for us to close ourselves off and not to get involved in what is around us. We make excuses on not being open to do it because we don’t think anything we do will ever make a difference. We feel we don’t have the words or talent to do it successfully! But as we do Mission, we need to follow what Jesus did as He walked on earth. We need to be open to His Will! It was His Will that all come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. It was His Will that He came to suffer and die for all!

We need to Be Open to those we meet who aren't exactly like us! We have to follow Christ's Commission and be open to take Him to anyone we meet. Jesus' command in Mark 16:15 says it so clearly, "*Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.*" As we go out in the world, it's really our opportunity to Be Open to everyone we meet.

We need to be looking for those who don't know Jesus Christ and don't seem to want anything to do with Him! As we seek the lost, it might put us in places we might not be comfortable, but that's OK! It's giving as God would have us give!

**Be Passionate!** What others are saying and doing might be exactly the opposite of what we believe and do. But we can't use that as an excuse for us not to be in Mission! We have to put ourselves on the front line and actively do Jesus' Commands! We can't let rejection or struggles stop us from doing the Mission God's given us, just because it's not going as well as we'd hoped it would go!

We have to be willing to put ourselves in situations that take Jesus to others, not just do the things that have always worked for us! We have to keep trying new ways to take Jesus to the world. The world is different than when we came to faith. The world is focused in different places than we might even believe! It's a matter of trust in God's power guiding us.

**Be Jesus.** As He has called you into Mission, He's given Himself as the best example of how to do it. Remember how whatever He did, He first turned to His Father in prayer. You need to do that too! Think who He surrounded Himself with. Think how He talked to those who were less fortunate and rejected by society. His Mission wasn't to just do the things that made Him comfortable, He showed love and care to those who weren't used to receiving it. He did this all the way to the cross!

And that's what He asks you to do! Luke 19:10, "*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*" His Great Commission was given to you with the promise of His continued presence! As His ambassador, it's your role and privilege to put yourself in His place so that as people see you and listen to you, they see Jesus! They have the opportunity to meet Jesus face to face as they see you!

Be active in Mission! Do all you can to share Jesus! What a glorious, focused life to have!