

Sermon: 'Join God on Mission' Colossians 4:2-6 (Part 15)

IN *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. How did someone influence you to buy or do something?
2. Pastor Henry likens being on mission with God to the farmer who cultivates, plants and reaps. Who are the people in your life who have cultivated, planted and reaped to bring you where you are today as a Christ follower?

UP *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Paul is 'in chains' (Col 4:3). Have two or three participants in the group read from their study Bibles to give more background about where Paul is when he writes this letter and why he was 'in chains.'
2. Luke 19:10 and Matt 28:19 point out God's role and our role in 'advancing the Gospel.'
 - a) What is God's role, and what role does He want us to take?
 - b) How does Pastor Henry's story of the couple he lead to the Lord, and their story of how they were invited to CSC, and how that couple was influenced by the one person who gave them books and sermon tapes illustrate the roles?
3. In the research to which Pastor Henry referred, he reported that 40% of evangelical believers believe they are called to introduce people to Jesus. According to Acts 1:8, 1 Tim 2:3-4 and 2 Peter 3:9, what should the percentage be? What are some reasons for the big difference? How can understanding the concepts of 'cultivating, planting and reaping' increase this percentage?
4. Pastor Henry suggests that Jesus' words in Luke 10:5-7 show a way to discern which relationships to invest in. What was He saying to the original disciples? How can we interpret this for today? What principle does Galatians 5:25 also give?

OUT *Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community*

1. In joining God on mission, what varying functions do prayer, alertness/watchfulness, thankfulness, open doors and closed doors or chains (Col 4:2-3) all play in our designated roles of cultivating, planting, and reaping? How does this reflect the 'OUT' response of our life in Christ?
2. What is the main thing from this discussion that encourages you:
to be the person who is passionate about introducing people to Jesus, and who is praying for open doors to walk through?
3. How can our group pray for you?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

Colossians 4:2-6

²Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Matthew 28:19

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .

Luke 10:5-7

⁵"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. ⁷Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Galatians 5:25

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

1 Timothy 2:3-4

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Sermon Study Summary

Today's sermon is from Paul's words in Colossians 4:2-6 where he talks of joining God on his mission. In today's message, the question was posed – **'What is our role in this mission and what is God's role?'** God opens the doors and we walk through them. God is the one who softens hearts, who draws people to Himself and His truth. Our role is to pray for open doors, to be alert to the doors God opens and then to step out in obedience and walk through the door God has opened for us.

Pastor Henry described how Canadian Medical Researchers received a special award for developing a highly effective vaccine for the deadly Ebola virus. He asked us to imagine that a deadly virus was taking the lives of thousands of Canadians every day and there is no cure. However, unknown to anyone, you had developed an antidote to treat this deadly virus and it is 100% effective. We were also asked to think of any reason why you would keep the antidote a secret? Can you possibly think of a greater gift you can give to those who are dying from this killer disease? What is true in the natural realm is also true in the spiritual realm. If Jesus is the way to forgiveness, freedom, true peace and satisfaction in THIS life and the way to living forever with God in the NEXT life, then wouldn't you agree that the greatest gift you can give someone is to introduce them to Jesus?

God's passionate desire is to bring all people back in relationship with Himself; that is why Jesus came (Luke 19:10). In Matthew 28:19, Jesus calls us to join Him in this mission. Today's sermon focuses on two principles outlined in today's passage from Paul. The first principle is: **God uses people who are passionate about introducing people to Jesus.** While in prison, Paul's letter to the Colossians asked not that they would pray for his release from prison but that they would pray that God would open a door of opportunity for him to share the good news of Jesus (Colossians 4:3). Paul was passionate about introducing others to Jesus. It was his greatest purpose and priority in life.

Pastor Henry indicated Researchers tell us that only about 40 % of Evangelical Christians believe they are called to introduce people to Jesus. He asked the following question- "Have you ever wondered why God has left you here and not taken you to heaven yet?" If you would not consider yourself to be a Christ follower then according to the Bible the reason you are still here is because God is pursuing you to be in relationship with Him (2 Peter 3:9). For those who are followers of Christ the Bible teaches we are still here because God wants us to be His representatives on earth (Acts 1:8). The primary reason we are here and not in Heaven is to give our lives to introducing people to Jesus and, together with God and one another, to bring His Kingdom and His Will to earth as it is in heaven.

This is the mission we have been called to and when we submit ourselves to Him and His purpose for our lives we are involved in the most God-glorifying activity possible, because nothing is closer to the heart of God than people coming in right relationship with Himself (1 Timothy 2:3-4). For the true Christian, this mission is more than just obediently fulfilling a mandate God has given, it is the overflow of a heart that is in love with Jesus. The second principle from today's passage is that: **God uses people who pray for open doors and walk through them.** Pray God would open doors for meaningful friendships with people who don't know God. Wherever that friendship is received and reciprocated, begin to invest a little more in those relationships. Pray about these people and ask God to show you which of these people He is working in and who are open and receptive to you. When you have a sense from God that someone is a person of peace begin to spend time with them with the sincere desire to get to know them. Jesus also instructs us (Luke 10:10) to not invest heavily in those who are not open to you as it is no good to try to force doors open that God hasn't opened and we must not be distracted lest we miss the doors that God has opened.

Pray that God would open doors for meaningful opportunities each day to point people to the love of God. Make the most of your opportunities (Colossians 4:5) and be alert to the guidance of God's Spirit in your life (Galatians 5:25) and God's Word to follow His lead. The key to receiving God's guidance and direction is hearing God speak to you through the Scriptures and His whispers or promptings. Before you head out each morning take time to connect to Jesus, thank Him for His goodness and faithfulness in your life, re-surrender your life to Him, read Scripture, confess to Him and invite Him to do your day with you. As you go through your day anticipate that God is going to open doors for meaningful opportunities to point people to the love of Jesus.

Being on mission with God is not unlike the role of the farmer. The farmer **cultivates** the soil, **plants** the seed, and at the proper time **reaps** the harvest. God is the only one who makes the seed grow and mature. Introducing people to God is a similar process that involves each of us and all of us working together with God. **Cultivating** is breaking up the hardened soil of someone's heart; **Planting** is dropping seeds of truth, and then there are times God calls us to **Reap**, to explain to those who are open how to begin a relationship with Jesus. God wants to involve all of us together to introduce people to Jesus. At times, He will use one of us to cultivate and another to plant and another to reap. Whatever it is He calls you to do, wherever it is He calls you to go, you are not alone – He is with you. He will guide you, protect you and empower you, working through you to make an eternal difference in the lives of others. That's why we're here and not in heaven yet!