**August 20, 2023 John 4:27-38**

 ***God’s Mission – My Purpose***

**Scripture:** *John 4:27-38 NRSV*

*(27) Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" (28) Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, (29) "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" (30) They left the city and were on their way to him. (31) Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." (32) But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." (33) So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" (34) Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. (35) Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. (36) The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. (37) For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' (38) I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”*

**Notes:**

1. Creator God ***spoke*** everything into existence.
	1. God’s mission is to ***restore*** a broken relationship.
	2. God ***chose*** Abraham to be the father of a great nation.
	3. God remained ***faithful*** to Abraham’s descendants.
2. God invited the prophets to join in His ***mission***.
	1. ***Isaiah*** offered amazing details about the Messiah.
	2. ***Jeremiah*** spoke of the Holy Spirit living within believers.
	3. ***Ezekiel*** spoke of an incredible promise.
	4. ***Joel*** saw the Lord coming with incredible blessings.
3. God sent his Son, Jesus, to declare his ***mission***.
	1. Jesus compared God’s mission to ***harvesting*** a ripe crop.
	2. Jesus compared crops of grain to needy ***souls***.
	3. God’s mission includes ***Sowers*** and ***Reapers***.
4. Be ***involved***, he has a plan for each of us.
	1. ***Invite*** everyone in your realm of influence.
	2. Be actively involved in the ***fellowship*** of believers.
	3. Be actively involved in ***evangelism***.
	4. Be actively involved in the process of ***discipleship***.
	5. Where do you ***fit*** in God’s kingdom?

**Script:**

I remember as a kid each summer we would grab a bunch of neighborhood kids and on Monday morning we would gather at the church for vacation bible school. We would hang out outside until the teachers would call us to come in. There was one year that we were playing ball outside and I was up to bat. As the pitch came towards me, I began my swing as another kid came up behind me and before I knew it he was lying on the ground with a giant lump on his face and a black eye. I don’t believe that boy ever came back to our church.

But each year we would enter the sanctuary and sit in our groups. Mrs. Brown would stand up in front of the kids and challenge us to the Bible Sword drill. Each year we would strive to be the fastest and most efficient at looking up scripture after the passage was called out. The drill would sound something like this; ***Attention***, and we would hold our bibles up in the air to prove we had our sword of the spirit; ***Draw Arms***, and we would drop our bibles in front of us in order to prepare to search for the given passage when given; ***John 4:27-38***, and our minds would be focused on the passage we needed to seek; ***Fire***, and with that word each child with a bible was rifling through pages to reach the goal, to be recognized as the fastest. This drill would be performed several times and the winner of each round would be brought up on the platform for the final drill to see who really is the fastest. The true goal of this exercise was to teach kids where the books of the bible were and help us to recognize scripture. It was to help us learn to read God’s word and how important it is in our life. Helping us to learn God’s mission and what our purpose is.

We live in an age of unprecedented biblical illiteracy. Perhaps at no time in history have we had as much access to God’s Word through books and electronic sources. Yet people know less about the Bible’s message and meaning than ever before. Most people, both Christian and non-Christian, see the Bible as a big mysterious book filled with random stories and moral teachings from cultures around the world and across more than fifteen hundred years of time. If I were to ask you what is God’s mission, how would you answer? And if I were to ask you what your purpose is in this mission I would get all sorts of answers, what is your purpose?

That is exactly what we will be addressing today as we continue to travel through our book, ***A People of Grace***. Today, I hope that you will understand what the mission of God is; and what your purpose is, in that mission. To get there I ask that you get your bibles out and we for old times sake, participate in the bible drill one more time. First one to get to the passage please stand but do not begin reading until I tell you. Also, if you prefer not to read, I will read it for us. …

Attention,

Draw Arms,

John 4:27-38,

Fire.

***(27) Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" (28) Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, (29) "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" (30) They left the city and were on their way to him. (31) Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." (32) But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." (33) So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" (34) Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. (35) Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. (36) The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. (37) For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' (38) I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”*** *John 4:27-38 NRSV*

***What***

Those who read the Bible consistently and carefully know that it tells a very simple story of a loving heavenly Father who works tirelessly to restore a broken relationship with his lost children. Genesis 1–2 explodes with excitement as our Creator God speaks everything into existence with all the hopes and dreams of a loving parent. Those dreams became quickly delayed with the freewill rebellious disobedience of his children in Genesis 3. The rest of the Bible, in short, details God’s mission to restore that relationship with his lost children, which includes you and I.

In Chapter 12 of Genesis God invites Abraham, along with his wife Sarah to join in this mission. God found Abraham to have great faith and chose Abraham to become the father of a great nation; not only an earthly nation (Israelites) but also of a spiritual nation (the church). God entered into a covenant with Abraham and committed himself to remain faithful to Abraham’s descendants both physical as well as spiritual through all generations.

God fulfilled his promise of giving Abraham and Sarah a son even after not trusting God and trying to do it on his own. God tested Abraham’s faith with an unusual demand: offer his son to God in a sacrifice. God provided a substitute sacrifice at the last minute, foreshadowing the day when God the Father gave his Son, Jesus Christ, as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of humanity; a substitute sacrifice for our sins.

God invited the prophets to join in his mission. All the prophets of the Old Testament from Isaiah to John the Baptist participated in God’s mission as they gave puzzle pieces to God’s people of faith to give them hope for the coming Messiah.

The prophet Isaiah offered amazing details about the Messiah. He will come from the lineage of David (Isa. 11:10). He will be born as a child to a virgin (9:6; 7:14). He will be called Immanuel, “God with us” (7:14). His rule will bring “justice and righteousness” (9:7). He will bring “great light” to the world (v. 2). He will be “mighty to save” (63:1).

The prophet Jeremiah spoke of a time when the Holy Spirit would not just be with believers but would live within them. God will make “a new covenant” with his people (Jer. 31:31). This new covenant will be different from the Ten Commandments (v. 32). God will put his law in the believers’ minds and “write it on their hearts” (v. 33). He will be the believers’ God, and they will be his people (v. 33).

The prophet Ezekiel spoke of an incredible promise. God “will sprinkle clean water” on believers to make them spiritually clean (Ezek. 36:25). God “will give [believers] a new heart and put a new spirit in [them]” (v. 26). God will put his Spirit in believers and work within them to follow his decrees (v. 27). “[We] will be [his] people, and [he] will be [our] God” (v. 28).

The prophet Joel saw the day of the Lord coming with incredible blessings. God “will pour out” his Spirit on all believers (Joel 2:28). “Sons and daughters will prophesy” (v. 28). “Old men will dream dreams” (v. 28). “Young men will see visions” (v. 28). God “will pour out” his Spirit on all of his servants (v. 29).

***So What***

God sent his Son, Jesus, to plainly declare his mission. Jesus told his disciples, “My food . . . is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). More than physical provisions for his body, Jesus hungered to do the will of his Father. Jesus was on a mission to complete the assignment of his Father.

Jesus had already illustrated the mission on which God sent him. He broke every religious and social barrier known to the Jews when he offered the good news about God to a morally questionable Samaritan (part Jewish, part Gentile) woman. Jesus even surprised his disciples with his outrageous witness to this obviously quasi-Gentile woman, of all people.

Jesus then compared God’s mission to harvesting a ripe crop. Farmers have the ability to determine the correct time for harvesting grain from their fields. Jesus made spiritual application with this imagery by comparing crops of grain to needy souls ready to hear the offer of forgiveness of sins, restored relationship with God, and eternal life.

Jesus reminded his disciples that God’s mission includes both those who sow and those who reap. Sowers do the hard work of preparing the soil, planting the seed, weeding, and watering. Those who harvest come at the right time, present the good news of the gospel, and harvest souls for God’s kingdom.

***Conclusion***

This overview of God’s incredible mission brings us to today. He now invites us to join Abraham, the prophets, and Jesus in helping him with his mission. How do we know what to do? Jesus illustrated clearly what we are to do with the parable of the wedding banquet in Matthew 22:1-14.

 (1) Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: (2) "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. (3) He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. (4) Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' (5) But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, (6) while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. (7) The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. (8) Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. (9) Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' (10) Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. (11) "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, (12) and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. (13) Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (14) For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:1-14 NRSV

Several spiritual truths emerge from this story:

* Many Jewish religious leaders rejected God’s invitation to attend his banquet (vv. 3-7).
* God would not cancel the event due to the rejection of many (v. 8). And he will not cancel the plans he has for the future of the world.
* God had his servants go out to the street corners and invite anyone and everyone to attend the special celebration (vv. 9-10). This is where we play a role in the story. You are invited to join God’s mission for the world. He wants everybody to be involved and he has a plan for each of us.
* Our purpose in God’s mission is to invite friends, family members, and everyone in our realm of influence to come to God. Who is there that comes to mind when I mention inviting others? Who are the friends you may have who do not have a relationship with Jesus? Who are your family members who are not enjoying the relationship with Jesus? Which of our neighbors and coworkers who would benefit with a relationship to be in a relationship with Jesus. While our actions in reaching out to these people is not necessary for your salvation, you are essential in helping God reach these people.
* It is important to understand that we do not make ourselves worthy in God’s sight through our own good efforts. Salvation is a free gift from God when we ask forgiveness for sins, exercise faith in Jesus, and accept eternal life (vv. 11-14).

From the day God created humanity until today, he has been on a mission to live in a vital, personal relationship with every person. God invites us to participate with him in that mission. He wants you to be actively involved in the fellowship of believers as well as fellowship with those who are not. He wants you to be actively involved in evangelism (Sharing the good news of Jesus with those who do not know) . It's as simple as telling your story and what Jesus has done in your life. And, He would like you to be actively involved in the process of discipleship; learning from others what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ; and teaching others the same.

SO the question I ask of you today, where do you fit in God’s kingdom? Are you rejecting the instructions of Jesus, or are you actively involved with the mission of God. God is not going to cancel His plans, some day Jesus will return and when that happens, will you be prepared, will you be involved, will you be found among the chosen? Are you willing to join him in his mission?